ROADS TO CHILDHOOD

ANNIE CARROLL MOORE

ROADS TO CHILDHOOD

VIEWS AND REVIEWS OF
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

BY

ANNIE CARROLL MOORE

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO

CAROLINE M. HEWINS

Who has passed on to children of many races the rare gift of a companionship with books based on friendship rather than on desire for knowledge.

CONTENTS

ROADS TO CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER ONE

ROADS TO CHILDHOOD

And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

EVA GORE-BOOTH.

CORNISH road has fallen in, fallen in, fallen in;
Cornish road has fallen in;
Where has it gone to?

I sang the words under my breath to the tune of London Bridge. A new road built to shorten the distance from one Maine village to another had sunk overnight—had vanished from the face of the earth. People drove from far and near to see the place where the road had been. Old inhabitants proclaimed once more the folly of building new roads to save time. It was far better, they said, to take time to climb over a mountain and feel safe than to risk a road built over a swamp.

I was a very little girl when the Cornish road fell in and my imagination feasted on the incident in all its dramatic possibilities. What had become of the road? Could it have fallen all the way through to China or did it stop falling somewhere between countries? What kind of people were riding over it and were they riding on ponies? Would the road ever rise again?

I firmly believed that the road would rise again and fervently prayed that I might be on hand to see it happen. Fortunately for me "Every Child" was still unborn and no volumes of complete pictured knowledge, no sterilized journeys through bookland, obscured those delightful pictures of my sunken road.

I had always loved the Cornish road for its woods and rushing brooks and, most of all, because it led straight on to the White Mountains. From its open stretches on a clear day I could see Mount Washington white with snow. Beyond the White Mountains lay the world, but I felt in no haste to explore it, I was too fearful of missing something vitally inter-

esting at home. The Cornish road from this time on became my favorite road. It was the high road to the world and a piece of it had fallen under an enchantment. No wonder, since the story of The Sleeping Beauty was my favorite fairy tale.

From my father I learned that the new Cornish road had fallen in because not enough water had been drained from the swamp; that it was quite possible not only to build strong roads across swamps, but even to build houses and barns, churches and schools upon them. Our own lovely old world garden and the great field behind it had been an alder swamp, he said. Even the tall pine trees which sheltered the garden from the north wind had not stood there forever, planted by God at Creation, as I had supposed. The pine trees and all the other trees had been planted by my father at the time the house was built and when my eldest brother was a little boy. But men, I learned, were often in too much of a hurry to see a thing done to spend time and thought in

laying a strong foundation. Roads and stone walls required very firm foundations. The Romans had understood this better than New Englanders. My father, although a native New Englander, seemed to have taken a great many of his ideas from the Greeks and Romans. These ideas, no doubt, enabled him to fight and win one legal battle after another over the roads of the Ossipee Valley and to put through the first experiment in intensive farming in that part of Maine.

New roads were absolutely necessary, he said, for people who must catch trains, for the stage coach which brought the daily mail, for boys and girls who must go to school, for doctors who must look after sick people living at a distance from one another, for lawyers who must protect the lives and property of the farmers, for the farmers themselves even though they might not want the roads to run through their farms. It was often necessary to persuade men to do things they could see no reason for doing. An untiring champion of new roads, my father was

no less ardent a lover of old roads, grass-grown or carpeted with pine needles, of wood-roads, of roads leading over long steep hills along the slopes of which the ripest blackberries grew—the very roads he had fought to have abandoned as highways—the little roads and lanes of his own boyhood.

When his business was finished he would often say: "Now we will go home another way, a little longer and not as good a road—one of the old roads with a beautiful view. I haven't been over it for a long time." Sometimes he shared with me the pictures memory gave back from the road, more often we drove for miles in "social silence." Out of these moving silences it was to come to me quite clearly in later years that civilization has always rested and will continue to rest on the dreams and fancies of a few men and women and their power to persuade others of the truth of what they see and feel.

Why then the singular reluctance of parents and teachers to allow time for the minds and hearts of children to be fed from

within—for the taking and storing of impressions which are to go with them through life but of which account is rarely rendered in childhood? We are so eager for our children to know the things we knew and all we didn't know at their age that we fail to provide the "leisure to grow wise" that must lie behind all who would "think with the heart as well as with the mind."

"Life, what is it but a dream?" murmurs Lewis Carroll, lingering with his thoughts of Alice long after he has passed with her through Wonderland and The Looking-Glass. I am quite sure that my father had no conscious thought of imparting lessons to me as we drove or walked about the country. It was my companionship he sought, not my improvement or instruction, and his invitations always meant a good time. Had I been in the state of perpetual interrogation children are so generally represented to be, I feel reasonably certain I should more often have been left at home, for I now know that my father relied upon the wide views

gained from those old roads, and from moving on through familiar landscapes, for the vision he brought to his personal and professional problems. Doubtless he realized that even a young child must learn to see things a long way off if she is not to become weary of everyday life.

One of my earliest recollections is of hearing about the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, of the wonderful things people had seen there and their adventures by the way. Some of these adventures were very amusing, quite like those of the Peterkins I thought. I was thrilled when I heard that a centennial celebration was to be held in an adjoining town. One hundreds years represented to me the limit of recorded time. The Sleeping Beauty had slept for a hundred years, my country was a hundred years old, and now Parsonsfield was to be put under the spell of a hundred years. I did not share my anticipations of this centennial celebration; I merely stated that I wished to be one of the family party. "She will, at least, enjoy the ride," some one remarked.

The day seemed made for a hundred years birthday. On such a day the ships in Portland harbor might be seen from a hill-top east of the village. We made an early start for the drive was a long one. The first few miles lay over a familiar road—the only road where the fringed gentians grew. We turned off at a cross-roads and after a long time began to climb a long, steep hill. From the top of this hill there burst upon my delighted eyes a marvelous view of mountains, lakes, rivers, fields and woods. Never had the White Mountains stood out so clearly. Never had I felt so near to them. I called them by name—those mountains of the Presidential Range, Mount Washington, Mount Adams, Mount Madison—and they seemed to stir and to move slowly on. Nearer at hand, above the Ossipee Valley, rose Chocorua. I had my Centennial celebration then and there. I wanted to stay on that hill-top all day long, to see the sun set and the moon rise and the mists float down the valley.

Of the actual celebration I remember

only that I was bored, and haunted by the fear that we might go home by another road. My mind was not yet ready to grasp historical facts and I paid little heed to my father's answer to the question, "How can Parsonsfield be a hundred years old before the State of Maine is a hundred?" But something very wonderful happened to me on that day. I was brought under the spell of historical perspective in the midst of natural phenomena. All the facts of history and geography may change, empires may rise and fall, governments may perish, but the centuries march on.

This year the State of Maine celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of admission to the Union as a separate State. I attended none of the formal exercises, but the desire to ride over the roads of my childhood proved irresistible and I rode with the child I had been. It is the only true way to an understanding of childhood and children—the only way to unite the dim and distant past with the present and the future. Once upon a time, Creation, Eternity, a hundreds years ago, a cen-

tury ago, my birthday—these are familiar phrases to children who have lived at the cross-roads of life and literature. So many and varied are these roads that no child whose imagination has been kindled and sustained in early life by habits of thought as well as of speech need miss a vision of his own wherever life may take him.

Back over the Cornish road I rode once more—this time in a motor with three fascinating children, five, seven and eight years old. Did I tell them of the sunken road and the Centennial view of my childhood? Oh, no! I was too eager for a share of their friendship. We had a picnic in the woods undefiled by reminiscence. Children are usually bored by the person who thinks aloud and one must be known and loved before it is safe to risk an intimate personal recollection. "We all go home at Christmas," Dickens reminds us in his "Christmas Tree," but we need not drag the children after us. If writers for children would only remember this!

"I want to buy some books for these children—no fairy tales, please, nothing

supernatural, nothing untrue to the facts of life. Something *authentic* about insects or animals and a book for the little boy to learn his letters from." The speaker stood at the door of the Book Caravan, that fascinating Parnassus on wheels which made a tour through New England the past summer. She was the mother of four children, from whose interests she looked as completely detached as a stranger. The eldest, a boy of nine, proved himself a fellow of resourcefulness and sagacity; the youngest, a boy of four years, still lived in another world—he it was who was expected to learn his letters from a book bought for the purpose. The mother did not avail herself of the pleasant privilege of entering the Caravan to look over the books with her children. She stood in judgment on the sidewalk before a large summer hotel. The eldest son it was who entered the Caravan and brought forth immediately "The Burgess Bird Book" as a book they would all enjoy. "This won't do, Robert, it is all about Peter Rabbit and I am sure it cannot be authentic," said

his mother after a hasty glance at the text. She entirely ignored the fine plates of birds by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Fabre's "Story Book of Science" was next put into her hands (not by Robert). She had heard of this book as authentic and passed it on to her eldest son as "a very fine book" and so it is, but it did not interest Robert. Without comment he put the book back into his mother's hands and disappeared once more within the Caravan. This time he stayed longer and finally emerged with "Wild Animals I Have Known." The mother had now spent all the time she wished to spend on books. She had heard that Seton was "nearly authentic" and Robert was permitted to depart with the book of his choice. The two little girls fell heir to "The Story Book of Science" and to another book of their mother's selection. They had no apparent desire to explore the book shelves of the Caravan or even to see what the inside of a caravan was like. Think of it, dear E. V. Lucas! "The inside of a caravan!"

As we rode away I waved to the littlest

one from the back window of the Caravan. That wistful little person waved feebly in return and then climbed wearily up the steps of the hotel—to learn his letters—while the Caravan moved on bearing away the few books which belonged to him. I had a rare opportunity to watch the people who came and carried books away with them that afternoon. There were mothers who did enter the Caravan to see what it was like inside and there were a few who came with a child's delight in books for their own sake. But far too many came there, as elsewhere, to illustrate their borrowed and sadly confused theories concerning children's reading; to inform, instruct, or improve, rather than to awaken, enlighten, and enlarge the minds and hearts of children who are living in a new century and a different world.

It is the didactic period of the 18th Century in France and England and of the early 19th Century in New England all over again. What can be done about it? It is often necessary to persuade people to do things for which they see

no reason—farmers that they should let new roads run through their farms—parents that dreams, fancies, humor, are the natural heritage of childhood and are at the foundation of what is beautiful and poetical in literature, art, and human experience. Never in our history has there been greater need for men and women of vision and power to persuade. These qualities may, and assuredly do, take form and clarity from the facts of science, but they live only in literature and in the aspirations of the human heart. The natural histories, the geographies, the universal histories of one generation rarely survive another. The plain truths of to-day are discounted by the amazing discoveries and inventions of to-morrow. We may as well take on trust, that there is truth of emotion as well as of fact.

Just as William Blake, the poet-artist; Perrault, the French lawyer; Hans Andersen, the Danish novelist; Lewis Carroll, the English mathematician; Mark Twain, the American philosopher and humorist—each in his own way—spoke to the spirit

of his age in terms of a child's understanding, so the writers of our time and the writers of future times must continue to speak to their readers.

CHAPTER TWO

WRITING FOR CHILDREN

When you are writing for children do not assume a style for the occasion. Think your best and write your best. Let the whole thing live.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

WE are tired of substitutes for realities in writing for children. The trail of the serpent has been growing more and more clearly defined in the flow of children's books from publisher to bookshop, library, home, and school—a trail strewn with patronage and propaganda, moralizing self-sufficiency and sham efficiency, mock heroics and cheap optimism —above all, with the commonplace in theme, treatment, and language—the proverbial stone in place of bread, in the name of education.

We have all remarked these tendencies,

we have regretted them, we have done something to offset them; but in the main, we continued to accept them until, held up by the shortage of paper and the cost of printing, we are forced to a more discriminating consideration of values in books.

The absence of any body of sustained criticism concerning the books written and published from year to year for the children of this country and of other countries, has naturally resulted in setting a series of fashions in children's books characterized by mediocrity, condescension, and lack of humor. "To be dull in a new way" has not been an inspiring slogan. No wonder contemporary writers of distinction hesitate to enter the field or to linger in it, even with the alluring prospect held out by publishers that "a perennially successful children's book is equivalent to an old-age pension." "It is an inspiriting thing to be alive and trying to write English," ays Quiller-Couch, but I confess to a warm fellow feeling for the writer who does not relish being labeled "juvenile" or "adoles-

cent" by his peers. Posterity may take his fairy tales, his fantasy, his "true story" to the universal heart, but he will not be there to enjoy the sensation. If he has done anything like as good work as some of the authors I have known, he deserves something better at the hands of publishers and reviewers, here and now, than the usual announcement of "a new juvenile." Not indiscriminate praise in the advertising of all of the children's books of a season, but informed criticism of good work and poor work is the need of our time. Without it we cannot hope for any considerable amount of distinctive, original writing in a field whose readers are its truest critics.

"It will never do for me to tell that I could not see the stuffs," says the faithful minister in 'The Emperor's New Clothes.' 'But he has got nothing on!' a little child cried out. 'But he has nothing on!' said the whole people at length. The emperor writhed, for he knew it was true, but he thought: 'The procession must go on,'" And so we go on writing and publishing

stories in which the characters "having nothing on," making them move a little on stilts, or rollers, or leaving them static in an environment without reality; and finally, robbing the encyclopedia of untimely information to put in the place of lively incident and dramatic human interest.

Who reads such books as these? I once asked a publisher. "I really don't know," he replied. "Books of that description seem to have a place on all juvenile lists. I had supposed they were peculiarly acceptable to public libraries and school libraries. They *are* dull, of course, but children must learn a great deal from them unconsciously." Don't you believe it! It is from just such books, presented by unthinking parents and teachers, that many children conceive their first distaste for reading and for foreign travel. The first and last requirement of any author or speaker is now, as it always has been, that he should interest and continue to interest his audience. In his "Art of Writing," Quiller-Couch reminds us of the writer's

obligation to put himself in the reader's place. "All reading demands an effort," he says. "The energy and good will which a reader brings to the book" should not go unrewarded. "It is his comfort, his convenience, we have to consult. To express ourselves is a very small part of the business; very small and unimportant as compared with *impressing* ourselves." "But isn't that in one of Quiller-Couch's lectures to Oxford students? I didn't know that he had written a book on writing for children." Nor has he to my knowledge, but I wish every writer for children would read what he says about style and jargon. 'Great authors never oppress anybody with condescensioin," he reminds us. "Language should be accurate because language expresses thought and if we lack the skill to speak precisely our thought will remain confused and ill-defined."

More of us must learn from France to be definite, to meet effectively such a new and interesting demand as that for the translation into the French language of a considerable number of children's books

written in English and not previously translated. Few of the children's books published in England or America during the past five years will bear this test. It is worth thinking about. One of the few, "A Little Boy Lost," by W. H. Hudson, was published more than five years ago in England but was unknown in the United States until the American edition appeared in 1918. Two other books which come readily to mind as well conceived and written in good prose style are, Eliza Orne White's "The Blue Aunt" and "The Firelight Fairy Book," by Henry B. Beston. "Master Simon's Garden" by Cornelia Meigs presents possibilities for the translator, in part at least. Unlike many of our stories of the Pilgrims it has atmosphere and charm.

A spirited translation of a children's book into another language calls for imagination and skill.

"All a nation's sentiment has gone into its words," by which I am reminded that we have long needed spirited translations of "Don Quixote" and "The Cid." "Of

all the books in the world," says Henry Dwight Sedgwick, "Don Quixote is the book for an English-speaking boy. Don Quixote is a man's book also, but it has a different look for the boy and the man of fifty. . . . The boy wants two qualities in his books, enthusiasm and loyalty, and here he has them jogging on side by side. . . . With the revolving years, laughter has come to take its place, with the divine attributes. Cervantes wrote about life and did not draw any final conclusions." There is a real understanding of boy nature as well as a fine appreciation of Don Quixote in this essay of Mr. Sedgwick's: "A boy is a just and generous reader," he says. "He reads his novelist straight through from start to finish. . . . That is the way novels should be read. Reading the first novel of one of the great men of literature is like Aladdin going down into the magic cave, it summons a genie who straightway spreads a wonderful prospect before you, but it is not until the second or third book that you understand all the power of the master slave."

"What do you find yourself looking for in the manuscripts of boys' books of the present day?" I asked a publisher who had given thought to the matter. "A real boy hero kept in the foreground all the time. The boy reader identifies himself with the hero you know and everything must feed through him. The hero must either think of things himself or remember that he has once heard that under the very circumstances in which he is now placed he should do the thing he is doing, etc., etc. Facts must be tied up to matters of genuine interest to boys. Concrete detail must be absolutely accurate. And, of course," he added, "the author must be able to write."

What of the popular author of the present day? Have we made any advance in this direction? It is very significant that the most popular author of boys' books in our public libraries—Joseph Altsheler—should have written over again, with a fresh sense of their reality, the tales of our pioneer life and struggle.

Why don't the boys read Cooper? Some of them do, after they have read "The

Young Trailers" and "The Forest Runners" by Altsheler. Many of them do not for the same reason that many of us do not turn to Cooper in an idle hour. But Altsheler has done what neither Cooper nor any other author has been able to do —he has taken the average American boy into the wilderness that he may realize his heritage in the history of his country and take his place there more intelligently. Boys who clamor for Altsheler read history and biography as a natural and necessary accompaniment. Nor do they neglect "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" or "The Boys' Life of Mark Twain."

Never in the history of writing for boys has an author attained universal popularity on so broad a foundation of allied interests in reading. I believe the secret of Mr. Altsheler's appeal lies in a deep love of nature, the ability to select from historical sources subjects of strong human interest, a natural gift for story-telling and great modesty. The best of the popular writers for boys are being stirred by a new spirit of desire to be truer to the real na-

ture of the boy, to make a stronger appeal to his sense of justice and fair play.

During the war boys rejected stories of the war and asked, just as we did, for personal narrative. And from this reading of "the real thing" in books, in newspapers and magazines, and in letters from their brothers or friends in the camps and at the front, they learned very rapidly some of the things which must go into the making of the American soldier of today. They began to see the difference between the old bluff, bluster and braggadocio fostered by so many writers for boys and the true American spirit. As they have rejected that type of informational book in story form in which scientific or mechanical information is presented by a "fake uncle," and are demanding the most clearly written and up-to-date books on engineering, aëronautics and submarines, so I believe they will reject stories and histories which are not well conceived and well written.

There was a time when the language of his book was considered of small ac-

count by the boy, but interest has been awakened to a degree which might surprise us if we did not stop to reflect on how popular Kipling, Stevenson, Dumas, Poe, Bret Harte and other authors have grown in a generation. Language means something now. It is one of the things we are fighting to preserve.

Boys who read in the morning papers of such wonders as the cruise of the *Emden*, the coming of the *Deutschland* and the flights across the Atlantic, want all the imaginings of a Jules Verne and something more in actuality. Authors must take time to originate new plots and to create heroes so well drawn as to require no words of praise from them—heroes who leave one sure that there are other worlds to conquer. Writers for boys of the new America must not continue to feed our provincial tendencies.

This is still more true in writing for girls, because the books ordinarily written for girls are very inferior in theme and treatment to the books written for boys. Nor are there, as yet, encouraging

signs among writers for girls that growth and change in girl life and its interests are receiving as thoughtful attention. They are still busy, even in these great days, with self-analysis and the reformation of characters of their own invention. There has been no real creation of girl character since "Rebecca." No girl has been free to live her own life. She has been at the mercy of some author who had her life all mapped out for her before she entered the book and placed her there merely to respond to the popular demand for certified characters, presented singly or in groups of abstractions.

Stories for girls, even when cast in an out-of-door setting, or projected from the old boarding-school to the modern college, continue to be introspective, sentimental, moralizing or didactic. The deluge of "glad books" following in the wake of "Pollyana" has given pause for reflection. "Pollyana" is more wholesome than "Elsie Dinsmore," but may she not be quite as far from reality? "Understood Betsy" was a hopeful glimpse of what may yet be

done by a competent writer, but "Understood Betsy" would have been a better story and would have made a larger appeal to girls had educational theory and practice been left out of it.

Is there not a connection between this poverty in stories of girl life and the lack of literature interesting to girls concerning the lives of women? The actual life of girls and women is so much more interesting than is commonly represented in books written for their reading that it gives us the right to ask something better for the girl of to-day. She cannot afford to waste her emotions nor her time. She has need of every resource that may fortify her spirit, sharpen her native wit and challenge the full powers of mind and heart to meet life where she finds it.

What do you find yourself looking for in the manuscripts of girls' books of the present day? This time I asked the question of a children's librarian. "For real stories—of city life, as well as of country life—stories as objective and interesting as books written for boys. Why do

the writers for girls always send their heroines to the country to be made over, or bring the country girls to the city to reshape the artificial lives of their cousins?" Why, indeed. I have often thought about this myself since so large a proportion of readers live in cities and towns and human nature is the same the world over. "Town life," says Sarah Orne Jewett, "will ever have in its gift the spirit of the present." Her Betty Leicester has achieved the rare state of being natural even though she has just come back from Europe and we first meet her in the dining-room of Young's hotel. It is the country girl—the old friend she meets at Tideshead—who assumes the artificial manner. This is quite possible as all of us realize who have known intimately the lives of both country girls and city girls. Simplicity and sincerity do not spring from the soil or from educational experiments, but from the human heart. Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, though speaking to a larger audience, is of the same stuff as Betty Leicester. The child who

journeyed with Dickens over a Maine railroad had already discovered a world outside of New England.

Writers of books for girls will gain ideas and background from reading the stories of an earlier time in contrast with those of the present. E. V. Lucas made a representative selection of these stories a few years ago and in his introduction to "Old Fashiond Tales" reminds us that the children of those days expected didacticism. "It was part of the game," he says. "The camaraderie, the good fellowship, the equality, that now subsists between children and so many of their elders was then as unknown as electric light. Children were still the immature young of man; they had not been discovered as personalities, temperaments, individuals." But the authors whose work has survived wrote to be *interesting*—"from a genuine wish to *give the nursery a good time.*" "That," says Mr. Lucas, "is the whole thing—the beginning, the middle and the end. Without it no children's book can live." Between Maria

Edgeworth and Mrs. Ewing came Charles Dickens with his "most perfect memory of childhood." "Dickens was so dramatic," says Mrs. Meynell, "that he could not see the somber children of discipline observing while the grown-up people ate (Pip at the breakfast-table of Mr. Pumblechook!) without thinking their thoughts. Neither Victor Hugo nor George Eliot," she continues in her penetrating sketch of childhood past and present, "has written quite like Dickens, from within the boundaries of a child's nature, from a child's stage of progress, and without the preoccupation and attitude of older experience."

Hugh Walpole has paid more than one tribute to Mrs. Ewing in "Jeremy." It is not "Jackanapes" alone we feel there. Miss Edgeworth had the faculty for dramatizing her story and her style is so direct, and clear, and strong as to blow the cobwebs from the modern writer, or critic, of children's books. But Mrs. Ewing was, above everything else, an artist, showing us what she saw and felt

in exquisite pictures—so *graphic*, said her friend Randolph Caldecott, as not to need illustrating. Mrs. Ewing's love of gardens, of painting, her gift of conferring personalities upon animals and toys, as well as upon children, stands out from her books as a light to the reader who would relive his childhood. I have just read for the first time her story called Reka Dom —River House, she tells us, is the English name for this best loved home of a child who had known more than one home—"the home of the 'Little Russians,' whose history was our history." I am struck with the beauty and depth of this story and its power of suggestion. The story is a true romance, packed with incident and characterization, revealing, as Mrs. Ewing never hesitated to reveal, the faults and foibles as well as the virtues of older people in their relations with children and young people. The writer must read Mrs. Ewing's stories over and over to get their full value and read them in contrast with other stories. The foundation of good writing or of sound criticism

rests upon comparative reading and reflection. Too many children's books have been written out of empty minds.

In one of her informal letters to Mrs. Fields, Miss Jewett gives in simple terms the substance of doctrine for those who would write stories: "I should read half a dozen really good and typical stories over and over! . . . I could write much about these things, but I do not much believe that it is worth while to say anything, but *keep at work!* If something comes into a writer's or a painter's mind the only thing is to *try it*, to see what one can do with it, and give it a chance to show if it has real value. Story-writing is always experimental, just as a water-color sketch is, and that *something which does itself*, is the vitality of it. I think we must know what good work is before we can do good work of our own, and so I say, study work that the best judges have called good and see *why* it is good; whether it is, in that particular story, the reticence or the bravery of speech, the power of suggestion that is in it, or the absolute clearness and final-

ity of revelation; whether it sets you thinking, or whether it makes you see a landscape with a live human figure living its life in the foreground."

It goes without saying that every writer must have his own method. All this applies as well to writing for children as to writing for grown people. Standards have been set which may not be ignored if a children's book is to live, but standards are not enough—the writer for children must connect with life, he must not scorn to belong to the generation for which he writes.

When we have taken to heart that children and boys and girls in their 'teens are in themselves and of themselves far more interesting than anything which may be written for their benefit or improvement —that writing for their reading is an art, and as such must be cherished, that it can be sustained only by vigorous and informed criticism, we shall have taken a very forward step in education as well as in book production.

CHAPTER THREE

A CHRISTMAS BOOK EXHIBIT

"Here is a booke made after mine own heart, good print, good tale, good picture and good sense, good learning and good labour of old days."

NO one except Dr. Crothers in another "Miss Muffet's Christmas Party" could possibly do justice to the authors, artists, and publishers who have joined forces to make one of the most attractive and varied outputs of children's books within my remembrance. American publishers stepped bravely into the breach caused by the conditions attending European production and importation, and have given us a number of books so good as to claim fuller and more illuminating comment than is possible in this rapid survey.

In the light of the interest and antici-

pation stirred by the announcement that "The Springtide of Life, Poems of Childhood," by Swinburne was to be issued in an edition illustrated by Arthur Rackham as a holiday book, I would recall Swinburne's praise of "The Golden Age" of Kenneth Grahame—"one of the few books which are well-nigh too praiseworthy for praise. The art of writing adequately and acceptively about children"—and he might well have added, for them—"is among the rarest and most precious of all arts."

At no time in the year is this truth brought home so convincingly as during the Christmas holiday season when to the parents and friends of children the gift of a child's book may mean much to a whole family. It was out of the consciousness of the need of many grown-ups to strengthen or to recover their touch with childhood that a custom known as "The Christmas Exhibit" sprang up in public libraries about twenty years ago. The idea grew very naturally out of the conception of the children's librarian that her

work had set her in the midst of a great family of children of widely different tastes and capacities for reading. She shared the confidence of children who were being deluged at Christmas with all sorts of books they didn't like and of those who longed in vain for books they couldn't have. She shared the confidence of parents who wondered why their children never read the books in sets, the prize books, the books so confidently recommended as "the best" for the age of the boy or girl in question. She shared the confidence of authors and publishers as to why their books were or were not sustained in sales. She haunted the book departments to watch the sales at holiday time. She learned a number of things and among them was toleration for books which did not meet the standards she had been accustomed to apply to books to be purchased by the library. She saw that mere display of books was not enough, that there must be a discriminating selection from the books of the year placed side by side with the old and tried favorites,

and that the books needed to be "opened up" to the grown-ups in the presence of children who were not their own "exceptional" children.

There were people who needed to sit down comfortably and talk about children's books with some one who was incapable of being shocked by any admission of freakishness, or apparent illiteracy, or even greatly surprised by surpassing intellectual feats on the part of children of bookish parents. There were other parents who were entirely ignorant of books, who wanted their children to have what had been denied them in childhood. No phase of work in the modern public library has presented so many opportunities for an enlarged outlook upon the writing, the illustration, the printing, the selling, and the reading of books for children, since children as well as grown people have been asked to comment freely upon the books selected for the Christmas exhibit. Indeed, I have come to feel that no reviewer should approach the children's books of the year without calling upon

at least one child, preferably not his own, to blaze a trail. And so I invited Edouard, aged nine, into an office so crowded with reviewer's copies as to daze every grown-up who had entered it before him. Edouard is the son of an engineer who is likewise a philosopher and a rare spinner of yarns.

"My father," says Edouard, "can make a book seem interesting when it isn't. Lots of things you want to know you can't find in books, not even in 'The Book of Knowledge,' but my father has done them or else he *knows* them in his *imagination*."

Edouard attends a public school and is in the fourth grade; he is a frequent visitor to the children's room of the library. He learned to read very suddenly, burst into reading, as I have known many children to do after much poring over pictures. He is a boy of more than average intelligence concerning things mechanical and scientific, he has a keen sense of humor, a rare appreciation of genuine fairy-tales, and his sympathies are quick and warm. He is a philosopher in one of the

most realistic stages of his development.

The sight of books piled high in unfamiliar surroundings did not daze him nor did it call forth as it might from one of those remarkable children in "On Our Hill" a speech yielding "perfect Shakespearian criticism" or clever quotations from his favorite authors. That he does not despair of an age in which the chipmunk takes a place in the scheme of life is quite clear. He paid no tribute to literary tradition. He surveyed the array calmly and then spoke:

"Is there a book here by Thornton Burgess?"

Without waiting for an answer he instinctively put his hand under a great pile of Boy Scout and war books and drew forth "Mother West Wind Where Stories" and clasped it to his heart.

"If I had a million dollars I would engage Thornton Burgess to write all the stories I could read."

Then followed a declaration of Edouard's passionate love for "Danny Meadow Mouse" and all his associates. If he

could live always in the country as "Danny Meadow Mouse," he would almost be willing to change his own being; but if he must continue his existence as a boy he believed he would rather live on in New York where he could see "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" in the novies, read of the little people of meadow and forest in winter, and watch their life in the long summer vacation spent in the country.

"Are there no other books which tell of the country, of birds, of animals, in a way you like?"

"Thornton Burgess can put it all over the others," was his reply, "because he sees what I see and I understand his language."

I shall not attempt to analyze or explain this appeal of Thornton Burgess nor answer the question sometimes raised as to whether he is not writing too many books of a kind in a manner somewhat monotonous to older readers. For thousands of boys younger and older than Edouard he has lifted the curse from nature study by

putting them in touch with life as they see it. His "Happy Jack" with its dedication to Dr. Hornaday as "the life-long champion of Happy Jack Squirrel" is illustrated by Harrison Cady and appears in a form which is new to those familiar with the small volumes of the Bedtime Series.

"The Brownies and Prince Florimel" next caught Edouard's eye; he wishes, as I believe many others will wish also, that Palmer Cox had written a shorter story and made more pictures. "For you don't *read* 'The Brownies' very much—you chase the policeman or the Chinaman and let the pictures tell the story."

"After They Came Out of the Ark" was very amusing to us both and is, I think, the most imaginative bit of work Mr. Boyd Smith has done for some time. The text is a little subtle for most children but the animals need no text since they put one very much in the spirit of Æsop, La Fontaine and Uncle Remus as well as with the story of Noah as told in the Bible.

Edouard cannot read "Uncle Remus"

and was not impressed by the sight of "Uncle Remus Returns" with the ten stories we have not had before. When asked if he would like to hear one, he chose "Tar Baby" instead of a new one and said there was one Southern book he had read over and over—"Diddie, Dumps and Tot."

"Twin Travelers in South America" looked promising but failed to hold his interest for more than a hasty glance at the pictures. "I think my teacher would like that book because it seems like a geography trying to be a story."

Edouard's teacher reads aloud but "she reads a great deal to please herself." Her introduction to "Alice in Wonderland" has been such that Edouard at present regards it as a book for "girls only." This explains in part his first quick rejection of "The Sandman's Forest" by Louis Dodge, one of the most distinctive and original books of the year but presupposing some literary inheritance derived from infusions of Lewis Carroll, Kipling, Barrie, and Kenneth Grahame. Edouard

said it "began in a very silly way." He makes a great point of the beginning of books he expects to read himself. I did not press the claim of this one but two days later called his attention to one of Paul Bransom's pictures of the forest and read a page of the story. "That sounds very interesting. May I borrow that book?"

I well remember introducing "The Jungle Books" to children in a similar way before Kipling became popular with American children. I read from Padraic Colum's "The Boy Who Knew What the Birds Said" and this, he said, was like the old fairy-tales, as indeed it is in its poetical rendering. Mr. Colum is also giving us "The Children's Homer," combining for the first time the story of the "Iliad" with the story of the "Odyssey" in a version closely following Andrew Lang.

"Little Brother and Little Sister and Other Tales by the Brothers Grimm," with its illustrations in color and in black and white, by Arthur Rackham, finds a place

already made for it by an earlier selection of tales illustrated by the same artist. The two volumes contain about one hundred of the best-loved tales in an authentic version. A re-rendering of old fairy-tales from various sources by a well-known author is to be found in Katharine Pyle's "Mother's Nursery Tales," with illustrations in color and in black and white by the artist-author.

The picture of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" is the only satisfying one I have ever seen. "She knows how to draw bears in a family," was Edouard's comment as he compared it with an illustration for the same story by another artist of which he said, "These bears are not a family, they are just colored to match the rest of the picture." One could wish Katharine Pyle had not softened some of the older folk-tales, and also that certain titles had been given the familiar form of "The Bremen Town Musicians," "Chicken Little" instead of "Chicken Diddle"—but one must pay warm tribute to the strength of her drawing and the childlike quality

always to be found in her work for children. Katharine Pyle's "Christmas Angel" is always a favorite book at Christmas time—and by this I am reminded that no Christmas story or collection of stories has come to my notice this year.

We have good reason to expect from the author of "Tales of the Punjab" an interesting selection and rendition of familiar fairy-tales. The opening story in "English Fairy Tales" by Flora Annie Steel is a tale of "St. George of Merrie England." Stories from the French, German and other sources are included and the attractive volume in traditional red and gold is illustrated by Arthur Rackham.

"Canadian Wonder Tales" is suggestive of Canada's romantic past and her Indian life. The stories were chosen by Cyrus Macmillan from his larger collection of folk-tales and folk-songs "that the children of the land may know something of the tradition of the mysterious past in which their forefathers dwelt and labored." Such titles as "The Indian Cin-

derella," "Glooskap's Country" and "The Northern Lights" may appeal to the boy and girl reader above the age of ten or twelve. The illustrations by George Sheringham add very materially to the interest of the tales, which are somewhat academic in their rendering. An excellent translation of "Serbian Fairy Tales," the work of Madame E. L. Mijatovich, with illustrations by Sidney Stanley, is deserving of more careful notice. "Papalluga" is the Serbian "Cinderella" and there are characteristic versions of other tales familiar in many lands.

Since no new books may be expected from Russia, we may mention here the great charm of the three volumes of "Russian Picture Tales" by Valery Carrick. They are very humorous and immediately appealing to young children. Frances Jenkins Olcott, whose careful work as editor and adapter has been in evidence for several years, has edited a collection entitled "The Book of Elves and Fairies."

Quite unexpectedly Edouard was held captive by "Jane, Joseph and John," that

enchanting trio of children born of The Atlantic Monthly Press. Mr. Bergengren has done something quite fresh and original and wholly in the spirit of child play in the verses ascribed now to John, now to Joseph, and now to Jane. The children are made very realistic and very childlike by the colored illustrations of Maurice E. Day. The marginal decorations in black and white by T. B. Hapgood give a very charming setting to the verse on each page and the typography is a delight to tired eyes. It is difficult to express in a word the charm of these verses but I think it lies in their projection of real children at play into an up-to-date world of their own. Edouard liked all of the verses but returned again and again to "The Flood," "The Home Guard," "The Transport," "The Policeman," and "The Western Front."

His teacher sometimes reads poetry, he says, but it is always sad or silly—never like children playing or anything funny like "A Very Exceptional Eskimo" which he read from "The Shining Ship" by Isa-

bel Mackay—a most attractive book as to cover and general appearance, containing verse of varying merit and limited appeal to children.

There was no other book of verse to claim our attention save "Every-child's Mother Goose" with its introduction by Carolyn Wells. The illustrations by Edith Wilson are from photographs of dolls dressed to represent the characters and are suggestive of the Mother Goose illustrated in similar manner by Patten Beard last year. It has been our experience that this form of illustration has more interest for grown people than for children. One could wish that so distinctive a selection of Mother Goose rhymes as Carolyn Wells has made might have been illustrated by an artist with "the sense of nonsense." Did Leslie Brooke exhaust it when he made the pictures for Andrew Lang's "Nursery Rhyme Book"?

The well-loved Mother Goose of Kate Greenaway shares the fate of her other charming books in being out of print this Christmas. A very attractive Mother

Goose is the new and small edition of the one illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith some years ago.

We would not press too insistently the question of size in the make-up of books —we think there should be variety in size as in other matters of form, but is there not a danger of making the large book too large and possibly reacting upon public taste in such a manner as to lessen the value of those refinements in make-up which publishers have been at such pains to secure? When the war restrictions are lifted, color, printing, typography, and the quality of papers and boards used in the making of children's books are sure to receive more careful attention. Meanwhile, very commendable attempts are being made to tide over this difficult period.

Miss Lamprey's "In the Days of the Guild" appears at a psychological moment, and may well be used to kindle appreciation of book-making as of the other arts. The stories are very simply and charmingly told under the evident influence of "Puck of Pook's Hill" and "Re-

wards and Fairies," those two books which breathe the very spirit of English history. The illustrations are negligible but the book itself is a distinct addition to resources which have been limited hitherto to chapters in histories.

A new edition of "Hans Brinker" with illustrations in color by Maginel Enright is in very good type and cannot fail to make an appeal to children.

"The Short History of Discovery, Written and Illustrated with a Match" by Hendrik Willem Van Loon, has interested many children as a picture book and is a delight to the grown-up. It is intended, as the author says, to be taken as an "historical appetizer" and suggests no end of questions to an imaginative child who is too often bored by the facts presented to him in the form of historical and geographical readers. Just why it reminds me of the "Just So Stories" I cannot tell, but it does.

Edouard's comment on a new edition of "Joan of Arc" of Boutet de Monvel was brief: "I miss the best pictures." For

this book in the French edition he conceived an ardent attachment when he was between six and seven years old. He would look at the pictures by the hour and then would bring groups of boys to whom he would show them and tell the story. Mr. Dugald Stewart Walker's "Dream Boats" with its delicate illustrations in color and in black and white made no appeal to him. Both in conception and in rendering this book seems to have been planned for an audience of somewhat sophisticated children. The book is attractive in its make-up.

Beatrix Potter's "The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse" is a new volume in the "Peter Rabbit" series. There are now about fifteen of these little books, and children who like them will always want the latest one regardless of whether it seems to be as good as the others. There are some series—and "The French Twins" by Lucy Fitch Perkins belongs to another of them—which bid fair to hold their own as the work of the same artist-author. One

wishes this were equally true of stories in series for older boys and girls.

There is rather a strong group of stories of Indian life, including "Lone Bull's Mistake," by James Schultz, the story of the breaking of a tribal law, a book of some value for boys and with the genuine thrill of life in it; "Lost Indian Magic," by Grace and Carl Moon, the story of the recovery of the tribe's magic—a turquoise elephant—which had been stolen years before the story begins; "Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains," by Charles Eastman, the life stories of fifteen famous Indian Chiefs. Paul Bransom's fine illustrations in color for Jean Thompson's "Over Indian and Animal Trails" delighted Edouard and interested him immediately in the book itself.

Jules Verne's "The Mysterious Island" with N. C. Wyeth's stirring pictures will give great pleasure to boys all over the country. Edouard wishes to own it for the sake of having "such a good picture of Captain Nemo." He likes it better than the one he has seen in the movies. It is

interesting to compare the comments of boy readers of Jules Verne to-day with those made by the boys of twenty years ago. His appeal is a refreshing one and the advance of science has put the modern boy in closer touch with him as an author who contributed something out of the ordinary to the boy readers of his own time.

A very good story for boys, suggestive in theme of "Captains Courageous" but quite differently handled, is "Jim Spurling, Fisherman," by A. W. Tolman. The author knows the Maine coast intimately and calls up pictures to those familiar with Vinalhaven, Isle au Haut or Matinicus. Dillon Wallace's "Grit A-Plenty" is another of his Labrador tales.

Captain Dugmore in "Adventures in Beaver Stream Camp" tells the story of boys wrecked on the coast of Labrador, who make their escape through their knowledge of woodcraft. Captain Dugmore can be relied upon for the accuracy of his scientific information. Walter Prichard Eaton has taken two Boy Scouts to Glacier Park. Dogs and their lore

form the center of interest in Walter Dyer's "The Dogs of Boytown."

Dan Beard has prepared "The American Boys' Book of Signs, Signals and Symbols." Henry W. Lanier, in a collection called "The Book of Bravery," has given the stories of heroic deeds of men of every age. Willis J. Abbott in "Soldiers of the Sea" gives the authoritative story of our crack fighting United States Marine Corps. F. A. Collins in his "Naval Heroes of To-day" tells of the deeds of daring by men in different branches of the navy. Francis Rolt-Wheeler's "The Wonders of War on Land" will be hailed with interest by boy readers of "The Wonders of War in the Air."

Two books stand out from the books of the year 1918 and to each of them has been accorded a more extended review.

In her story of "The Blue Aunt" Eliza Orne White has made a contribution to the literature of American child life which would have delighted Mary Mapes Dodge or Horace E. Scudder. It is such a picture of American family life in the present

wartime as could only have been given by one who was herself a child in the time of our Civil War, a born psychologist, an artist in patriotic suggestion and a very good story-teller.

"The Blue Aunt," who comes from Virginia as an unwelcome visitor to her stepbrother's home in Massachusetts and is supposed by little Evelyn—who has heard her father say, "She'll be as blue as indigo"—to be literally blue in color, proves to be a most charming and understanding "Aunt Hilda," with a real love of all children and an absorbing interest in the French orphans. Children will read the story for its dramatic interest, lively incident and genuine humor. They will be quite unaware that they are hearing very good talk among the grown-ups—a rare feature in a child's book—or that the chapter in which Jim and Charley Norcross dispose of the grapes and peaches from the family garden and the apples from Judge Baxter's, for the benefit of the French orphans, has distinct ethical value. They will be unconscious that the coming

of the Blue Aunt from Virginia to Massachusetts in the springtime symbolizes the strengthening of the spiritual union between the South and the North. They will not connect the childhood of the Blue Aunt, who was born in France and lived there until she was seven, with her words: "It seems to me that not to go to France now would be like a soldier who was drafted claiming exemption for a reason that did not hold." They may not realize why Eliza Orne White lighted the bayberry candle on Thanksgiving night and sent the Blue Aunt on her pilgrimage overseas the morning after. But those who wear the blue in France and those who remember it here will not need to be told that this is a book for all who love the children of France and America. It should, and doubtless will, be translated into French and other languages.

We were literally starving for such a book as the author of "Green Mansions" has given us in "A Little Boy Lost." That it should have been published several years ago in England and remain unknown and

unread by those who have the education of American children at heart is conclusive evidence of the need of more illuminating reviews of books for children. I had seen no review of this book, I had talked with no one who had read it. I had all the joy of discovery as I began to read from galley-proofs and without knowledge of the authorship.

There is but one Englishman who writes like this of South America, but could it be possible that W. H. Hudson has given us at one and the same time bits of his autobiography and the dream of a child with touches as poetic and mystical as William Blake's own "Little Boy Lost" or "The Piper"; as rare as Shelley in flight of birds and clouds; as whimsical as Barrie's "Little White Bird"; as sternly beautiful as Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face"; as dramatic, in the description of a troop of wild horses, as Kipling; as rich with humor, in its stories of old Jacob and the Old Man of the Sea, as an English folk-tale told by Joseph Jacobs; as intimate, in the smaller aspects of nature, as "The

Wind in the Willows"; as filled with pure nonsense—in Martin's replies to the savage woman who speaks to him in her own savage language, and in some of the verses, as a page from Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll?

One might go on with these reminders, but in its sense of reality and in the unity of childhood with wild nature, I know of no book with which to compare it. The author himself says of it:

> Like any normal child, I delighted in such stories as "The Swiss Family Robinson," but they were not the books I prized most; they omitted the very quality I liked best—the thrills that Nature itself gave me, which half frightened and fascinated at the same time. They expressed nothing of the feeling I myself experienced when out of sight and sound of my fellow-companions, whether out on the great level plain with a glitter of illusory water all around me, or among the shady trees with their bird and insect sounds, or by the waterside and bed of tall, dark bulrushes murmuring in the wind.
>
> These ancient memories put it in my mind to write a book which I imagined would have suited my peculiar taste of that early period, the impossible story to be founded on my own child-

ish impressions and adventures, with a few dreams and fancies thrown in and two or three native legends and myths about which I heard from my *gauche* comrades then on the spot.

I believe that its appeal, since it is so varied, will be to children of different ages and to every grown person who has any love of beauty or remembrance of childhood. It is a wonderful book to read aloud to children, to older boys and girls or to grown people, at home, in libraries, in schools, or out-of-doors.

CHAPTER FOUR

VIEWING AND REVIEWING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

For golden friends I had.

A. E. HOUSMAN.

WHEN Ralph Bergengren's "Jane, Joseph and John" came forth from The Atlantic Monthly Press last fall, we said, "Why shouldn't it happen again? Why not another golden age of writing and illustrating children's books at first hand such as Mary Mapes Dodge and Frank R. Stockton inaugurated when they left *Hearth and Home* and took up their abode at the house of *St. Nicholas* in 1873?"

We remembered that long before Horace E. Scudder succeeded Thomas Bailey Aldrich as editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* he spent three years in the editing of a

children's magazine. (*The Riverside Magazine for Young People*, 1867-70.) We recalled his crusade against the school readers of the time, his pioneer work in collecting fables and folk stories, his rewriting of American history, his rare philosophy and understanding of child life revealed in his essays first published in *The Atlantic Monthly* and well known to us as "Childhood in Literature and Art."

And then we began to think about what good friends Mr. Scudder and Mrs. Dodge had been and how many great friendships they had shared with children. Pictures of Mrs. Dodge flitted across our consciousness. We saw her seated at her busy desk writing at top speed those charming letters which brought to the service of *St. Nicholas* the best writers of her time—we saw her holding up authors wherever she met them by her laughing challenge to write something "good enough for children." No author ever seemed to her too distinguished to write for childen. "Are you sure you are equal to it?" was her quick reply when Kipling asked if she was

not going to ask him to contribute to *St. Nicholas;* and a few weeks later "Rikki-Tikki" and "Toomai of the Elephants" were outlined at Mrs. Dodge's hospitable home. Thus began the "Jungle Books."

All of our impressions of Mr. Scudder and Mrs. Dodge have been taken from their books or their editorial work and from those who knew them best—Ruth McEnery Stuart, Mrs. Scudder, and Mr. Clarke who is the present editor of *St. Nicholas.* We have been told that Mr. Scudder often asked Mrs. Dodge to go to the theater with him on his visits to New York, and we like to think of them seated together at Wallack's or Daly's. *St. Nicholas* was founded on the frank and full recognition of a child's right to a good time—"a child's magazine is its playground," said its editor; and what a spacious playground she made of it!

To both of these editors, the artist, as well as the author, was a contributor; he was expected to illumine the text of the story or poem for the eyes of children and at the same time to preserve the integrity

of his drawing and his full conception of the subject. Reproductions of famous paintings or engravings were chosen by them because of their appeal to children. Had the "art wave" which swept the public schools in the late 'nineties been founded on any such sound psychology and understanding of children's interest in pictures, we should not now be lagging so far behind England, France, and Scandinavia in our picture books. Why should not our art schools be distinguished for their opportunities to create and originate for the children of this country and Europe in terms of our contemporary life? For years we have longed for picture books in color showing the life of great cities and typical country scenes in America, South America, and Europe—not lithographs, not geographical readers, not peeps at anything, but pictures that make you want to go there. Photographs do not and cannot supply the illumination of the artist.

Some of the French and Scandinavian picture books best typify the kind of thing we have in mind. To give their own life

and color to New York, New Orleans, St. Augustine, parts of New England and California would require the service of artists of a high order, and we are familiar with many of the difficulties in color printing. But—we argued—if The Atlantic Monthly Press dares put out in wartime a big flat book with wide margins and with Maurice Day's pictures of children who make very good impressions of those very real children, "Jane, Joseph and John"—even if they do leave something to be desired in action,—why shouldn't The Atlantic Monthly Press dare some more? And so —very timidly over a Boston telephone—the momentous question was put: "Does 'Jane, Joseph and John' mean that The Atlantic Monthly Press is going to undertake the publication of children's books?" "Oh, no, nothing of the kind," came the reply in cheerful but positive tones. It was not the editor who spoke, he was then in Europe. If anything very unusual and original for children were to come in, it might be considered for publication, but there were no "plans."

We rang off the telephone but we could not ring down the curtain on Mrs. Dodge and Mr. Scudder. We seemed to hear Mrs. Dodge saying once more, "Yes, I know. It *is* impossible of course, but let's do it just the same." And so, while The Atlantic Monthly Press had no apparent intention, in the fall of 1918, of leading a renaissance movement in the writing and publishing of books for children, we are not in the least surprised to learn of its very definite plans for the fall of 1919. The Atlantic Monthly Press announces the publication of good modern books for children, with the consistent maintenance of a high literary standard. Special attention is to be given to their illustration, typography, binding, etc. Librarians will note with interest and relief that the books are not to form a series—and parents with confidence, that the same editorial care will be given to them as to *The Atlantic Monthly* itself.

Somebody had to do it. We have confidently looked for just such an announcement from some competent source imme-

diately following the war in Europe. Conferences, individual and collective, with publishers and booksellers preceding the holidays of 1918 confirmed our faith that the time was ripe in America for a vigorous movement of back to childhood and youth and their dramatic human interests. A number of publishers are eagerly looking for writers who have the power to communicate with children and young people on their own initiative—writers who have practiced the fundamental art of expression and are in touch with the life of the time. We are convinced that publishers do not want to go on supplying plots, scenes, and bits of character study from their offices. They really prefer authors who have ideas and the ability to express them, nor are they afraid to risk the work of unknown authors, provided it is good work.

Somehow or other, the impression seems to have got abroad that when one writes for children or young people, he divests himself as far as possible of any natural or acquired ability to write and adapts him-

self to a formula of what the publisher is looking for in a "successful juvenile." It is conceived that this formula must be subscribed to before embarking on the undertaking and there are many who shrink from the surrender. We are frequently consulted by authors and would-be authors, artists and would-be artists, as to the variations of the formula—each publisher, according to tradition, having a different one. With all of them, it is taken for granted, we are familiar, since there is a prevailing impression that librarians and publishers are always too busy with "devices" to read books in a natural fashion.

We may as well face frankly at the outset this reluctance to write for children on the part of competent writers, for it is symptomatic of a grave defect in our national education. We have drifted too far apart, in the life of our American colleges and universities, from the current of life in popular educational institutions in which the free use of books by children has been sustained for a generation or more. Too often we have "let George do

it"—in our schools, in our libraries, and most of all perhaps in our homes. Reading for credit is a barren substitute for reading for love of a book. Why should we not look to our universities to blaze new trails for the stimulation of both writers and readers of books for children?

There is no better form of training in the fundamental art of expression than a sincere attempt to write to interest children and young people following competent lectures and discussions of comparative reading. Why not courses for readers?—the parents and teachers, publishers and booksellers, of the next generation—who need to be placed in a much more understanding relation to the resources on which they must rely in the education of children, if education is to become as important as we believe it to be.

When the Children's Room of the New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street was opened in 1911, a little book marked "Suggestions from the Public" was placed at the reference desk. It is interesting to note how many

of the things suggested have been carried out—how constantly we have turned for new ideas to that moving "public" made up of parents, teachers, authors, artists, uncles, aunts, editors, journalists, ministers, doctors, lawyers, actors, musicians, European professors and novelists, naval commanders and army officers, American publishers and librarians, booksellers, and above all, of children who have grown up in the room and who turn back to its service critical faculties developed there. Since we are often asked what kinds of books are most wanted at a given time, we will now confess to drawing heavily upon "Suggestions from the Public" on occasion, just as we expect to draw heavily on *The Bookman's* readers for this new department. We have undertaken to conduct it not because we were "sure we were equal to it," but because the work has so long needed to be done, and we had faith in the kind of help we should get from the editors and readers of *The Bookman*. "We come to bury" as well as "to praise," but we come primarily to stimulate more

discussion of books in their intimate relation to the needs and desires of childhood and youth.

We have been a long time in leading up to the books of 1919, for we have less to say about them than we had anticipated. It has been impossible to see some of the most promising titles, even in galleys. The publishers have endeavored to supply information where text has not been available, but we are impressed with the necessity of securing more adequate information at an earlier date if the preliminary review is to serve the practical end of informing readers who wish to give prompt and careful attention to the selecting of books for children and for holiday exhibits.

The present indications are that the number of outstanding books for children and young people will be smaller than for 1918. Several publishers have had a dreary winter and spring, two or three are childless, to their regret but to our relief when we survey the variety of makeshifts and done-overs announced by others. We

turn with a feeling of increased respect toward a house that has steadily declined manuscripts too poor for publication. There have been many such manuscripts in the market.

A number of extremely dull books have been brought over from England. Books of "Sound Science and Fascinating Reading," two of them are called. We do not question the science, but the children we know would not find them readable.

In selecting books for American children, great care should be taken to include none which belong to the present order of dead wood on library shelves. Books of science, invention, mechanics, sports, travel, biography, histories, stories—both modern fairy tales and stories of adventure—all hold these lurking possibilities if they are not up-to-date or if written in a manner which seems remote to an American boy or girl. "Too English" they say of them as, no doubt, "too American" would be the English boy or girl's characterization of similar books written for the children of this country. We need

to be very frank in this matter of interchange of books on informational subjects. They must not be dull and they must be authentic. In both countries there is a large heritage of didactic writing for children, which began accumulating immediately after the French Revolution. It varies slightly in style from one generation to another, but is easily recognized in kind—by children as books their parents and teachers seem to like, and by librarians as the dead wood of their shelves. It is our experience that the boys and girls of this generation are seeking more information and more authentic information from books than has been true of any previous age, but they have become more critical as to form and subject matter. Up-to-date reference books such as "The World Book" command respect because they do not pretend to be "fascinating reading," but deal, immediately and in English which can be easily read, with the subjects contained in them.

We have long contended that didacticism, condescension, and propaganda are

the natural enemies of the reading habit in this country. Why are the library shelves containing books of science, travel, biography, especially collective biography, and European histories, so often called the deadest parts of a children's room? Not because the subjects in themselves are uninteresting. Not because children do not want to know what the world is like. Their interest is keen in knowing what the world is like, as any good teacher of history or geography, any thoughtful parent or any intelligent librarian will tell you. The answer to the question and the remedy for the condition lie with the authors, illustrators, and publishers, and we may add, that in the solution of this problem there may be found an open door to more intelligent and friendly international relations.

From the days of Peter Parley we have been taking "peeps," "glimpses," "zigzag journeys," and "excursions" to various countries at an educational jog-trot.

Peter Parley and Jacob Abbott did some traveling, to be sure, but they also

wrote extensively to the miscellaneous pictures provided by their publishers, and dwelt chiefly on the peculiarities and differences of the people they met and the places they visited. Neither they nor any of their long train of successors have given a sense of what it is like to live in another country and know the people as "real folks."

We have distributed remnants of history and poorly drawn portraits of very dead heroes and heroines, and then have wondered why so few children or grown people seem to be interested in other countries or races.

We often turn back to Dr. Crothers's "That History Should be Readable" in his "Gentle Reader," and we like to recall at this moment, William Roscoe Thayer's "History—Quick or Dead?" in *The Atlantic Monthly* of last October. Who is to read the "Quick" histories if not the young people of the country? Florence Converse evidently realizes both the need and the opportunity in her enlightening and sympathetic introduction to Nannine

Meiklejohn's "The Cart of Many Colors," a well-written story of life in Italy in the Little Schoolmate Series. The books of this series are a notable exception to those to which we have objected, in that they have been written by persons who are native to the countries or have lived in them. They are unequal in interest and we have always regretted the series title, also the fact that Miss Converse's illuminating introductions begin with "Dear Schoolmate." The subject-matter is so valuable as to suggest a wider reading if given a distinctive chapter heading at the beginning or at the end of the book. We have seen nowhere so informing and so humanized an account of Italian life in America as Miss Converse gives in her introduction to "The Cart of Many Colors."

A most inspiriting announcement comes from the new house of Harcourt, Brace, and Howe. Dorothy Canfield is writing that much-needed "History of France for Young Folks." It promises to be the real thing, since she has been living and mak-

ing French history for the past three years, and has her girlhood memories of France before the war and her keen sense of dramatic values to put behind it. It is not possible to express an equal degree of confidence in a resuscitation of Bonner's "Child's History of France," although we have not seen the text. We would strongly advise comparative reading or examination before purchase, in the case of all revisions of old texts in the fields of science, invention, history, travel, and biography. In rare instances do rewritten histories appeal to the reader. We do not here refer to such textual changes in school histories as are necessary to keep them up-to-date and to mark changes of national sentiment. Excellent and much-needed work has been done on our school histories since the war. We are asking for a more spacious order of book than a textbook can ever be.

Geoffrey Parsons's "The Land of Fair Play" is a remarkably lucid and a very much more interesting presentation of "How America is Governed" than we have

ever had before. The aims stated in the introduction are so well carried out and Mr. Parsons's style so completely exemplifies what we have been pleading for in the book of information, that we take heart and confidently look for that other book for which Norwegians, Danes, Swedes, Russians, Italians, Frenchmen, Chinese, Japanese and Englishmen have been asking for years. That "other book" is a one-volume history of America true in its essential background, dramatic in form, in which the writer does not lose himself in colonization, the French and Indian war or in any of "our wars," but really tells the story of America to the children of other countries with an appeal to the heart as well as to the mind. No text-book, no book written as propaganda, could accomplish the work of such a book from the hands of a competent author, artist, translator, and publisher. It is as much needed by the children and young people of our own land as of any other; and there could be no fitter celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims than an announcement that

such a book under assured conditions is under way in 1920.

The new edition of "The Last of the Mohicans" bids fair to call out some of the best work N. C. Wyeth has done; we have seen only the end papers and cover design, but we have known what a good time Mr. Wyeth was having with the book. There could not be a more favorable moment for a revival of interest in Cooper in his relation to American history. In one of the library reading clubs last winter, the boys debated the merits of Cooper and Altsheler. Feeling they had a sure thing in his known popularity, the Altsheler side did no work, and the debate was won by the Cooper side who read Cooper to establish his claim to present consideration. The recent death of Mr. Altsheler is keenly felt by the boys and by all who have realized the value of his work in its relation to American life and American history. Mr. Altsheler's popularity has been greater in public libraries than that of any living writer for boys in the past twenty years, and his influence

has been broader than that of any earlier writer for boys within our memory.

He has fortunately left unpublished works. "The Sun of Quebec" is announced in his French and Indian War series. We are confident that his publishers will place none of Mr. Altsheler's work in other hands to be finished. There can be no graver mistake committed than that of giving over the work of a popular author for boys or girls to be finished and announced under the name of the dead author. How often has the difference in style been pointed out and how keen is the resentment of the boy or girl critic, we are here to testify. "From Appomattox to Germany" bears the author's name on the title-page, and it is stated in the introduction that the author has followed the "method" of Coffin. We would characterize it as a camouflaged Coffin book bearing no other relation to the work of Charles Carleton Coffin than a confusing similiarity in size and cover design. Starting with a most unfortunate title and a miscellaneous lot of old pic-

tures it has achieved its weight—for it is very heavy—without continuity of historical style or dramatic appeal to the boy reader, who likes to live through a period. We cannot and do not recommend this book.

Our reaction to the revision of Francis Drake's "Indian History for Young Folks" is entirely different. The author's original work here forms the larger part of the volume, new material being added in separate chapters for the purpose of bringing up-to-date a standard history still in demand.

"The Romance of Aircraft" by Laurence Yard Smith is the first book to cover the early history of the subject in readable form for children's libraries and should be of immediate interest and value. The book not only tells of the experiments of flying in France in the eighteenth century —all types of aircraft are described, their invention, principles of flight, and their use during the war.

A story of aviation by Austin Bishop is

announced as authentic in its information and interesting as a story.

"Czechoslovak Fairy Tales," retold for young folks by Parker Fillmore, and illustrated by Jan Matulka, is also announced, but has not been available for examination; nor have we seen "The Wonder Garden," a collection of nature myths and tales by Frances Jenkins Olcott and illustrated by Milo Winter.

Miss Olcott's work in the selection and adaptation of myths and fairy tales is well known for its sincerity of purpose and consideration for the understanding of children. We turn to older renderings, however, for the traditional atmosphere and color.

We have seen galleys for "The Children's Fairyland," an edition of Madame d'Aulnoy's tales, shortened and illustrated by silhouettes done by Harriet Mead Olcott. Children will be attracted to the tales in this form as an introduction to a more complete collection.

A new and attractive edition of Scud-

der's "Fables and Folk Stories," has illustrations in color by Maurice Day.

One of the distinctive books of the year is a Mother Goose illustrated by Boyd Smith and edited with historical notes, and with the reprint of the first known preface to a child's book, by Lawrence Elmendorf. Boyd Smith and Miss Elmendorf worked individually upon this book. The illustrations are not historical but humorous. They vary in quality, the drawing of "the cow that jumped over the moon" and certain others being too realistic—and of the stock-farm for the Mother Goose, suggested by Randolph Caldecott and Leslie Brooke. Miss Elmendorf has done a piece of painstaking and scholarly work with the rhymes, and the book will form a valuable addition to the reference shelves of children's rooms and school libraries, as well as to gift books.

"The Æsop for Children," with some of Milo Winter's best work in its illustrations, is in striking contrast, for the fables have been attenuated and modernized.

The work is unsigned and the book goes forth under the name of the artist and its publisher. We shall deal with this subject more adequately in a future article; but let us state right here that we are ready to take as strong a stand as need be on the matter of rewriting and reëditing the classics for children. Hands off Mother Goose and the old fairy and folk tales, the poetry, and the great traditions of the race, unless the work is signed and there is fair evidence of competent literary treatment.

"The Three Mulla-Mulgars" of Walter de la Mare is a story of monkeys—full of fascination and charm, of unusual words and quaint phrasing, but is not simple enough in style to be very generally read by children in its present form.

The book that seems destined to be taken straight to the hearts of children, and of grown-ups who have the sense of nonsense and a love of little boys, is "David Blaize and the Blue Door." It reminds one of "Alice in Wonderland" but is not an imitation. Mr. Benson has

created his own delightful pictures of David at the age of six. The breath of England is in it, the house, the garden, the lake, the rooks in the elm trees, the village. We feel all these even behind the "Blue Door" where everything comes alive to David—the flame cats on the nursery walls, Noah and the animals of the ark, the old brown trout in the lake, Bradshaw, Waterloo and all the rest. It seems the most natural thing in the world for a giraffe to open a third-story window and lean down to whisper in David's ear, "I live on surprises." So do we, for this book was not sent by its publishers, but discovered by sheer luck in an editor's office. We have seen the book, just published in the United States, only in an edition printed in England in December, 1918, to which the illustrations of H. J. Ford contribute since they are in harmony with the text; but the author himself has such a gift for making one see and feel that the book would be read if it had no pictures. We shall have more to say of this book in its bearing on the reading of

children under ten years old, and of "David Blaize," by the same author—for after we had read "David Blaize and the Blue Door" we simply *had* to read "David Blaize," published several years ago, to see if there was any connection. There isn't, as a book, for "David Blaize" is the story of an English schoolboy, written for grown people rather than for boys. But there is a connection of another and subtler kind for all who have known intimately the little and big boyhood of men.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOLIDAY BOOKS

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,
There is no measure upon earth.

LAURENCE BINYON.

"HOW much does a dream cost?' asked Peter.

"'A golden florin,' answered the merchant.

"'I'll have one, please,' said Peter, and he handed over the golden florin he had found as he came whistling down the road.

"The old man took a kind of wonderful sugar-plum out of the ivory horn and gave it to Peter to eat. 'You will have the dream next time you sleep,' said he, and trudged on. . . . He was a very old man; his face was puckered up into a thousand wrinkles, like the skin of a shrunken apple, and he had long, snow-white hair and a white beard which reached almost to

his waist. Moreover, he was strangely dressed in a robe of cherry scarlet and wore golden shoes. From a kind of belt hung two horns on silver chains, one an ordinary cow's horn, the other a beautiful horn carved of the whitest ivory and decorated with little figures of men and animals. 'The Seller of Dreams' had all kinds, he said—good, bad, true, false—even a few thrilling nightmares."

After we had read this story from "The Firelight Fairy Book" and had seen Maurice Day's picture of the enchanting figure of the old "Seller of Dreams" clothed in cherry scarlet, and the lively young Peter with his green hat and basket of eggs, we ceased to care whether we found "a Christmas story" on the title-page of any book for 1919. We had one to our own taste right here. Peter's Aunt Jane, one of the most delectable and convincing characters that ever appeared in a fairy tale, rolls into the story in a coach drawn by twelve white horses. She had become queen simply by walking into a deserted castle, putting on a crown, and telling the servants

she intended to be queen. "You see, Peter dear, there's nothing that a woman of determination and energy can't accomplish." "The Seller of Dreams" is a capital story from beginning to end, and we wish its title had been given to a book with so strong an appeal to boys and girls of ten years and older who are lovers of Howard Pyle, Stevenson, and Quiller-Couch.

We had been kept in suspense about this book ever since last July. "The Firelight Fairy Book" told us nothing we wanted to know. Such a title might cover an utterly commonplace collection of stories. We had no idea who was writing or illustrating the book. And so, at last, we yielded to the impulse to go over to Boston and find out. There we had the good fortune to meet the author who assured us the stories were born of his own imagination, influenced by his love of the old French tales and his strong feeling for the sea. He had been in service at Verdun and he had spent several months with United States destroyers, submarines, and

battleships. "The City Under the Sea," he told us, was outlined and partly written in a submarine in active pursuit of German submarines off the coast of Ireland. In his "Full Speed Ahead" we have since found a record of this experience of submarine life, of interest to boys although written as a series of articles for older readers.

Mr. Beston has lived by the sea all his life (he is still a young man) and one feels the influence of tales of buccaneers and pirates, of phantom ships, and strange wonders.

The collection, as a whole, seems to us to have more of the quality, interest, and wonder of the Arabian Nights, conceived in an atmosphere of the western world, than that of any other book of fairy tales we can recall.

There is no hint of war on land or sea in any of the stories; there is no preaching or teaching. The author's love of beauty and sincere desire to tell a good story for art's sake will be revealed as soon as you begin to read "The Queen of Lantern

Land." Maurice Day's illustrations show very much stronger qualities of imagination and action than were revealed in his pictures for "Jane, Joseph and John."

Mr. Day has also made the illustrations in color and the drawings in black and white for a well-timed new edition of "Fables and Folk Stories," by Horace E. Scudder. We had no opportunity to talk with this artist; but it interested us, as it may others, to compare his pictures for the book of new fairy tales with those for the old fables and stories. There is a child-like quality of interpretation in his work that is very appealing to children. His animals might be stronger. The illustrations of Richard Heighway for Joseph Jacobs's delightful rendering of Æsop present an interesting contrast.

As we walked across Boston Common to The Bookshop for Boys and Girls after these illuminating visits to publishers, we wondered what Mr. Scudder would say and do about the storified Æsops, the self-conscious verse, and the devitalized, sterilized collections of folk and fairy tales so

freely advertised as "free from savagery, distressing details, and excessive pathos." It is nearly forty years since "The Children's Book," a collection of the "best and most famous stories and poems in the English language," was published, and the first edition of "Fables and Folk Stories" appeared as a school reading-book at about the same time. The publication of these books marked the beginning of a new era in children's reading. The fable and folk-story came into their own in American public schools and households very largely through Mr. Scudder's popular renderings of traditional tales, his keen constructive criticism of the conditions affecting the child-life of his time, and his unshaken faith in "the spiritual judgment of childhood," which he likened to "a winnowing fan" separating literature from chaff in the earliest stages of reading. He it was who said of Hans Christian Andersen: "He was not only an interpreter of childhood; he was the first child who made a real contribution to literature." We have felt justified in giving space to this

subject in a review of holiday books since parents, teachers, librarians, and booksellers are in a state of annual bewilderment in making a choice of versions of folk and fairy tales.

Mr. Scudder's preface to the early edition of "Fables and Folk Stories," and Charles Eliot Norton's introduction to "Heart of Oak Books," contain the substance of doctrine for those who would put childhood in touch with literature in any age. Summed up in terms of our own practical experience, it amounts to this: Begin young enough. Never feel afraid to recommend the best of its kind and leave literature free to make its own appeal. It goes without saying that you must have first-hand knowledge of the books you recommend and a growing understanding of child nature outside of books. Ever since we discovered that Clifton Johnson tripped his giants up with strings, we have made sure that "Jack the Giant Killer" was compared with the rendering of Joseph Jacobs or Charles Eliot Norton before purchasing a new collection in which the story

appears. We have been asked if we did not believe that the reading of fairy tales helped bring on the war. We wanted to put this question to Lord Dunsany, who has been through two wars, when we heard him say that the two books he read most in early childhood were "Grimm's Fairy Tales" and those of Hans Christian Andersen, and that he now feels his parents could not have chosen more wisely. We feel confident that he had a good translation of each, for he proved his intimacy with Randolph Caldecott on his visit to the Children's Room of the New York Public Library—and made first acquaintance there with Leslie Brooke's pictures, for fairy tales and nursery rhymes, with which he had a very good time.

King Albert of Belgium, Queen Elizabeth, and the Duke of Brabant had visited the children's room a few days before we went to Boston. No wonder we were possessed by fairy tales, having seen one come true before our very eyes.

We long to do an article on the folk-tales of reviewing, but we have no editorial

sanction for the idea and we must content ourselves with sharing one more Boston impression. In a dingy old building near the South Station we found plenty of evidence that imagination and courage still live in the publishing world. We had been captivated before leaving New York by the "Nonsense Book," a collection of limericks composed by other people but copied into a book and illustrated by Susan Hale in a manner suggestive of Edward Lear. The remarkably good form of this book and of a boy's book bearing this publisher's imprint made us want to know more about the publisher. We found him to be a person with a very definite interest in art and a refreshing point of view. He showed the plates reproducing in color forty paintings by Italian Primitives for "The Story of Jesus," by Mrs. Richard Henry Dana, Jr., and some pages of the text. Mrs. Dana planned this book for the religious education of her own children. In the choice of Bible text, as in her selection of reproductions from the old paintings, Mrs. Dana has preserved

the full dignity and beauty of both. We think the book will meet a need we have often heard expressed.

"Inklings for Thinklings" was published on the day of our visit. For this book Susan Hale wrote the verses and made the drawings. Giant Longlegs winding the church clock and the fish flying out at the chimney top, would alone make the book worth owning. This book and the "Nonsense Book" furnish incentive to children who like to make pictures on paper or in their own minds. That the text is in script is a matter of minor importance. Children may or may not read it. The drawings are the distinctive feature of the books, and the books are so well made as to admit of hard usage in schools and libraries.

Those who have read Susan Hale's "Letters" will remember that they are illustrated by some very amusing sketches from all parts of the world. We have refreshed ourselves with these letters at intervals ever since we began reading for this review. The letters to her sister

Lucretia were made personal to us by our early and strong affection for "The Peterkin Papers." We discovered the Peterkins in a bound volume of "Our Young Folks." They were the first real people we ever found in print and we thought them very funny. We believed that we alone knew them and delighted in repeating what they said and did. None of the "letters of Susan Hale" are written to children; but they are brimming over with fun and the joy of going on with life, whether it meant visiting a succession of Christmas trees in Germany or entertaining a house party of young people in Rhode Island. We were naturally reminded of Edward Everett Hale (Susan was his sister), his intimate association with children and his writing for them. We were still with the Hale family when we secured a copy of "Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children" for "over night only." Our enjoyment of the picture letters was all the keener since they recalled Mr. Roosevelt's expressed delight in "Our Young Folks," and in "The William Henry Letters," by Mrs. Diaz,

which he first read in that magazine. We yield to none of many temptations to quote from a book we should all own. There are two outstanding things about it in this connection—at all times and at all ages Mr. Roosevelt treated his children as equals—and he *took time*, about three-quarters of an hour every evening, to read aloud to them. "This reading to them in the evening gives me a chance to see them that I would not otherwise have, although sometimes it is rather hard to get the time."

We venture to predict that if several thousand fathers of American families would begin to read aloud to their children on a similar basis of equality, we should see great changes in many publications we have recently reviewed. John Martin's "Big Book for Little Folks, No. 3" is one of them. We have read it through. Parts of it we have read aloud —a test we frequently apply in reviewing. We have looked at all its pictures from several points of view. We shall not attempt to discuss its original features. We

do not like them, but there are many who do. We limit our criticism to the small treatment of great subjects as instanced in retold and written-down versions of Bible stories, myths, folk-tales, and biographical stories by various authors, and to the lack of any arrangement or continuity of presentation of a great variety of subjects. Two quotations from life sketches will serve to illustrate:

> Washington was a child of bright opportunity. He was born in a home of wealth, good breeding, and honorable beliefs, yet he founded a nation in which a child of the humblest people may grow to the highest place of honor and service.

Thoreau fares worse than Washington.

> He was *so kind!* and he was a busy man too. He built his own house. He had a garden. He made lead pencils. He wrote books. Most likely we never did know a busy man who was more kind than he was to everybody—animals and all—children and all. No wonder he became a very famous man.

"When you are writing for children," says Anatole France in "My Friend's

Book," "do not assume a style for the occasion. Think your best and write your best. Let the whole thing live."

Emilie Poulsson has certainly done this in her admirable translation from the Norwegian of Dikken Zwilgmeyer's "What Happened to Inger Johanne." The book is alive from beginning to end. It is thoroughly Norwegian in atmosphere —mountains, fjords, and people all came back to us with a rush, but the character of Inger Johanne is universal in its appeal. She is so purely objective and so entirely natural that her adventures and pranks will interest boys as well as girls. We have already shared the chapter on "Traveling with a Billy Goat" with a boy of ten, who says Inger Johanne is more like Tom Sawyer than anybody else. The chapter on "Christmas Mumming," and the one dealing with Inger Johanne's desire to be a circus rider, are capital for reading aloud. These stories have been popular in Norway since their first appearance in 1890. The illustrations by Mrs. Florence Liley Young give an admirable

and very understanding interpretation of the text. We regret that the book does not appear in more distinctive form. It looks too much like a great many other books for girls, and with its strange title will need introduction to take its full place in a library collection. It is just the kind of book we have been asking for as a girl's story, and we are not surprised that it comes from Norway. We have been waiting years for an English rendering of the Norse myths by a Norwegian.

"Czechoslovak Fairy Tales" is the most distinctive and interesting of the juvenile publications of a new New York firm. Parker Fillmore has retold these Bohemian folk-tales with a fine appreciation of fancy, fun, and fairies impossible to render in a literal translation, of which we have read several. In "Katcha and the Devil" the characteristics of the Bohemian devil are revealed. Like the Norwegian troll he is often terrifying in appearance, but is easily imposed upon and is generally made the butt of all sorts of jokes and pranks. We read "The Golden Godmother" last sum-

mer and were then impressed by Mr. Fillmore's background of reading and study, and his very human application of it to a difficult piece of work. The frontispiece and cover design—three little brides with a peacock—are in the brilliant colors of the Czech national costume. They are the work of Jan Matulka, a young Bohemian artist, who has also done the full page illustrations and the striking decoration in black and white. We have not seen the finished book, but we wish there might have been more illustrations in color and a more spacious setting for them. The book is unique.

Seumas MacManus has written a characteristic book of Irish stories called "Lo and Behold Ye!" "The Man Who Would Dream" is a story with which to delight boys on Hallowe'en. Many of the stories are good for reading aloud and for the story-teller. "Doctor Danny," Irish stories by Ruth Sawyer, who heard some of the tales she tells on a long-ago visit to Ireland, was published early in the year

and immediately added to our collection of books for older girls and boys.

The outlook in stories for girls is encouraging. "The Pool of Stars," by Cornelia Meigs, is a very well-written story, sustaining until the end a mystery, and good comradeship between a boy and girl of high school age.

Mrs. Seaman's "The Slipper Point Mystery" is for younger girls. It is an out-of-doors story with a touch of history, some adventure, and a very nice friendship between two girls.

"The Refugee Family," by Flavia Canfield, is not as interesting a story as the title promises. The information is authentic and there is some account of the work of the American Committee for Devastated France. Story-reading girls want atmosphere and color, and these are to be found in "Comrade Rosalie," by Mary Constance Du Bois, and "Vive La France," first written for *St. Nicholas* by the Knipes. Both stories are interesting and well written. Mrs. Abbott has set the stage for too many characters and situa-

tions in "Larkspur." The Girl Scout interest was crowded out by the French orphan, her grandmother, and a German spy. German spies are in all the stories with war interest. But we prefer reading of them to having anything to do with "Rosemary Greenaway" or her family. Joslyn Gray writes too well to go on presenting life so morbidly. "Betty Bell," by Fannie Kilbourne, is not in the least like Miss Alcott's stories. It is a very readable, thoroughly sophisticated, and well written analysis of a cross-section of Betty Bell at sixteen. We do not recommend the book for children's reading. In the libraries its title would immediately attract girls from ten to twelve whose mothers would object to it. It is more nearly comparable to "Seventeen" than to any other book, but that there is a very considerable difference we will endeavor to show in another article dealing more directly with the reading of older girls and boys.

That girls read boys' books more than they ever did, and that they always have to some extent, is evidenced by our own

reaction to Walter Dyer's "Ben the Battle Horse." No one who loves a horse could help reading that book. Our one-time familiarity with the life and habits of horses, assisted by a book of colored plates of famous trotting horses, laid the cornerstone of our library experience with boys in their 'teens. Some one recommended reading from Baldwin's "Horse Fair," but the boys of "Jackson's Hollow" would have none of it. This book would have held them spellbound. We think a good many girls will read "Bob Thorpe, Sky Fighter in the Lafayette Flying Corps." Why shouldn't they? The book is not merely an exciting story; Austin Bishop has furnished accurate information on the subject of flying in readable form. "The Romance of Aircraft," by Laurence Yard Smith, gives an interesting historical account of flying for boys and girls, although written for older readers. "Up the Mazaruni for Diamonds," by William J. La Varre, is so well written and illustrated by photographs taken by the young explorer himself and, moreover, so well printed, that we

found ourselves reading it a second time. The book has an introduction by Mr. Fiala.

"Shasta of the Wolves," by Olaf Baker, an English author, also attracted us for reading aloud and for the fine illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull.

We have just discovered why, with the best intentions, we cannot read "The Book of Bravery, Second Series." It is arranged in "an ascending scale of courage." The third series due in 1920 will be the highest. We shall begin at the top. We have grave suspicions that many boys are waiting to do the same thing. The work has somewhat the value of collective biography for library and school purposes.

Elva S. Smith has edited a valuable collection of patriotic verse and prose. "Good Old Stories," selected by Miss Smith, who dedicated this collection to Caroline M. Hewins of the Hartford Public Library, was published earlier in the year. Miss Smith's feeling for literature for children and her long experience of appraising it for the Carnegie Library of

Pittsburgh are expressed in her compilations.

Franklin K. Mathiews's "Boy Scouts Book of Stories" comprises a good selection of well-known stories from Mark Twain, Quiller-Couch, O. Henry, and others.

William Heyliger's "High Benton," we are told, is the best story he has written.

Harold Latham's "Marty Lends a Hand" is a distinct advance over his book of last year. The boys are not yet quite so free from supervision as we like to have them in a boy's book, but the mushroom growing in the old copper mine was a clever idea and there are German spies to be dealt with. Mr. Barbour has written four books. "The Heart of Pinocchio" is not kin to the well-known classic and will prove a disappointment to those who order it without examination. There are several more books for little children. "The Scotch Twins," by Lucy Fitch Perkins, was not available for examination. "News from Notown," by Eleanor Ellis Perkins, is a book of humorous verses, illustrated

by her mother, Lucy Fitch Perkins. Of books of verse, we would choose "When We Were Little: Children's Rhymes of Oyster Bay," by Mary Fanny Youngs, with an introduction by Theodore Roosevelt, and illustrated by photographs of the Roosevelt children. "The Burgess Bird Book," by Thornton Burgess, with fifty-seven colored plates drawn by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, has been described by Dr. William T. Hornaday as the best children's book on bird life in existence. "The Children's Life of the Bee," selected and arranged by Alfred Sutro and Herschel Williams, preserves the spirit and very largely the language of Maeterlinck. One of the most beautiful books of the year is illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith. "At the Back of the North Wind" has given her opportunity to reveal a depth and imagination beyond anything in her earlier work. There is also a new and smaller edition of "The Water Babies," illustrated by the same artist, and the colorful poster for "Children's Book Week" was made by Jessie Willcox Smith.

"The Book of Wonder Voyages," by Joseph Jacobs, has been reprinted in a reduced size. "Good Wolf," by Frances Hodgson Burnett, appears in a reprint as if it were a new story. "Saint Joan of Arc," by Mark Twain, is a short sketch with an attractive cover and three illustrations in color by Howard Pyle. Boutet de Monvel's "Joan of Arc" is being reprinted in English.

Every time we try to write down our impressions of "A Journey to the Garden Gate," by Ralph M. Townsend, "David Blaize and the Blue Door" comes to mind. They are both dream stories, but very different. We think Mr. Townsend's story is well written, and that it will be enjoyed by exceptional children. As for "David Blaize" he already has a distinct place; the chapter on flying is a never-ending joy. "David Blaize" is constantly meeting "Jeremy" behind "The Blue Door" in our imagination. Why shouldn't he? David Blaize was six when he found the key and Jeremy was eight on the birth-

day his Uncle Samuel gave him the toy village. They are wonderful books, these two, and each seems to deepen the impression of the other.

CHAPTER SIX

CHILDREN UNDER TEN AND THEIR BOOKS

And gardens, gardens, night and day,
Gardens and childhood all the way.
ALICE MEYNELL.

"As wise as a child four years old."

IT was William Butler Yeats who quoted the old Irish proverb and suggested its bearing on the survival of poetry and fairy tales in Ireland. By happy chance the day was St. Patrick's, and when Mr. Yeats had finished reading out of one of Lady Gregory's books, we went back to our desk in the children's room of the Pratt Institute Free Library, with songs of the poets who had dipped their pens deepest in the wisdom and faith, the beauty and fancy of childhood, thrilling our consciousness.

The room was filled with restless chil-

dren of many races. Little brothers and sisters three, four, and five years old had come with big boys and girls eight, ten, and twelve years old to listen to the stories and poetry with which we were accustomed to celebrate the day and the coming of spring:

> When afther the Winter alarmin'
> The Spring steps in so charmin'
> So smilin' an' arch
> In the middle o' March
> With her hand St. Patrick's arm on!

The verse always heralded the day, taking its place beside an old print of St. Patrick. On the table below, books were opened up and shamrocks grew beside the flowers so often mentioned in stories and poems of springtime—daffodils, the narcissus poetica, a crocus, a violet, or an hepatica nursed into early bloom by an old English gardener, whose cobbler's shop led into a greenhouse. This gardener, for he was a cobbler only by circumstance, "ran away from the shoes" when a lad of

twelve; and lived and worked long enough in the gardens of England to carry about with him a rare love of flowers, an expert knowledge of plant life in all its varying forms, and a deep appreciation, born of his own hunger for beauty in boyhood, of the place of nature in any form of education of children. He shared with us the desire to reflect in the children's library of a great city the life of the woods, the streams, the meadows, the hillsides and gardens of a more spacious childhood.

Very early in our work of satisfying children with books, we had discovered how many of the stories and poems known and loved by us as children were meaningless to children who had never seen the country in springtime, and whose parents seemed to have forgotten their childhood. The "nature study" of the schools was as yet unfortified by botanical specimens, or by the expanding resources of the Children's Museum of Brooklyn.

"We have been listening to a poet," we told the children on that St. Patrick's Day, "a poet who says there are still fairies in

Ireland." And then Allingham's "Fairies" trooped forth, and from "The Songs of Innocence" William Blake's "Piper," "The Laughing Song," and "The Lamb"; Wordsworth's "March," Celia Thaxter's "Spring," Miss Mulock's "Green Things Growing," Emily Dickinson's "The Grass." We did not hesitate to share Mr. Yeats's own:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

We have never hesitated to share a poem we feel we would have liked as a child. We recall how still the room grew as we read:

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

There was a fairy story, of course, and we were ending with "The Jumblies" and other nonsense verses when some one called out:

> "'Up the airy mountain
> Down the rushy glen'

again!" This time several voices mingled in Allingham's "Fairies."

In that far-off time many libraries still observed an age limit of ten or twelve years, and gravely questioned the propriety of reading aloud to children or telling stories to children in a room from which books were being circulated or consulted in answering the casual questions brought from the schools. The public schools of Brooklyn observed a grade limit. "Children below the third grade do not read well enough to profit from the use of library books," we were told. The system of classroom libraries had not then been introduced. The children in question ranged in age, we found, from five or six to eight, and sometimes even nine years if they were backward in learning to read.

Primers and easy reading-books were by no means as attractive as they are now, and a child who was not a natural reader had very little incentive unless he could range over a number of picture books and illustrated books. What was to be done for these children who had no books at home, or having them felt no desire to open them for their pleasure?

What is to be done for such children anywhere? That thousands of them have been growing up in America, we have only to look at our statistics of illiteracy to learn.

Fortunately for us and for the children of those pioneer days in the history of children's libraries, the director of the Pratt Institute Free Library, Mary Wright Plummer, was a poet—with a deep realization of the needs and the desires of children—as well as a practical administrator and educator of international reputation. Into the plans of the architect for this library she had set a children's room with southern exposure, connected by open archways with the book stacks and

open shelves of the circulation department and of the general reading room.

This children's room, the first in the country to be included in an architect's plan, was the first to be furnished with chairs and tables of varying height, the first to consider the right of little children to enjoy books, and their physical comfort in so doing. So far as we know, it was the first library to make the circulation of books subordinate to familiar acquaintance with books and pictures in a free library, and to give picture books by well-known European artists a place on the walls and the shelves of the children's room as well as of its art department. Here Boutet de Monvel's "Jeanne D'Arc" became a children's book.

From the low windows, children and grown people looked out upon a terraced playground down which the children rolled and tumbled in summer and coasted in winter—for the trustees of this institution had played as boys in the neighborhood and had forgotten none of their interests. Their desire for this children's library was

that it should grow to seem a homelike and familiar place to the children of the city. The Brooklyn Public Library, with its unique Brownsville Children's Branch Library, had not yet come into existence. Many of the children walked miles for their books, or in turn paid car-fare for one boy that he might select books for a group of his friends.

It clearly would not do to circulate books of which we had no first-hand knowledge and recent experience. We were left free to take our own way in bringing books and children of all ages together. We chose the way leading back to our own childhood and its first interests in reading. It may take a long time to get an emotional grasp of the child we used to be, and an intellectual perception of any one of several varieties we might have become in a later generation; but the chase is exhilarating and we recommend the effort to all parents, teachers, and librarians who would really know books in their relation to growing children.

I was not a bookish child, I discovered,

although I had always cared to read. I have no recollection of any process or method by which I learned to read, but I hold a very vivid recollection of the first book from which I read. It was a large print edition of the Gospel of St. John. The time was early evening and I went to bed thrilled with the discovery, and the beauty of the words. I told no one until I could read well. I may have been five or even six years old, I have never been sure, but I recall very definitely that I brought to the reading of poetry, the psalms, and the prophets strong impressions of the beauty of the country about me. Beyond Mt. Washington lay the world, just out of sight, and beyond the low horizon line to the southeast lay the sea. I had seen the sea, but I had not seen the world, and I was always wondering about it.

This sense of wonder and mystery, the beauty of nature, the passing from night to day, the speaking voices of the people about me, the sound of music are present in my earliest recollections. I had a keen interest in pictures and I was always see-

ing things in pictures. I had no gift for drawing and the mechanics of writing was extremely difficult for me. I shall never be able to unearth a manuscript written before the age of ten. My early literary compositions were all scribbled and dispatched by post. I never had a doubt that what I whispered as I scribbled was read by the cousin or brother to whom it was sent. Writing, like going to school, was a social experience full of news of people and of what they said and did. Never did I write out of deeper emotions. I hated goodness in books and the tendency to get everybody to behave alike, in life or in books.

The invitation to read was all over the house, and on stormy days I roamed through the rooms, following my brothers from library to attic, seeing what the books were like, often watching them reading and trying to read their books. The bound volumes of *St. Nicholas*, *Our Young Folks*, and *Harper's Magazine* were always in the offing and long before I could read I was familiar with their illustrations.

I did not care to be read to, except by my father, who read just as he talked and seemed to like the same books and pictures I did. *The Nursery* was his favorite magazine, I firmly believed not because he said it was, but because he seemed so interested in it. I associate with his reading the most beautiful parts of the Bible, Æsop's "Fables" interspersed with proverbs, nonsense verses, old songs and hymns, a great deal of poetry, stories out of the lives of great men, and many stories of child life. He had a keen sense of dramatic values, a power of mimicry of animals and human beings, a strong sense of humor, and an intimate knowledge of men in their various forms of social and political organization. Moreover, he possessed the rare faculty of complete identification with the emotional life of childhood in all its stages of growth and change, and the imagination to know when to create a diversion. Since my intuitions have been at all times keener than my powers of external observation, I identified myself in turn with the childhood of my father. I seemed

to have known him well as a little boy. That I was like him in certain qualities of mind I was to learn in maturity; that I shared his emotional life, I knew as well at four or five years old as at his death, when I was twenty.

We make no apology for dipping back into our childhood and the childhood of our work, in this introductory consideration of the reading of children under ten years old. We warn the reader it will not tell him just the book to read or to buy for the child he is interested in. We have never liked the idea of selecting "best books" for anybody,—least of all for a child who is trying out the reading habit, we dare not set an age limit for the reading of a book. But we feel no hesitation in bringing together a group of books, which we shall describe as "Some First Books" and a second group that we shall call "Some Later Books."

There have been many and important changes since 1900 in the attitude toward the younger children in schools and libraries. Not only is there a great deal more

story-telling and reading of poetry in both institutions; but school principals and teachers of vision, who have always been readers and lovers of books, have made it possible for classes of school children to come to public libraries for a larger view of the countries about which they are studying, or just to read books and see pictures in an environment which is known to invite reading.

There are to be still greater changes following close upon the war in all countries. Children are from birth to have better physical conditions. Mentally and spiritually they must live in a larger world than the generation that has preceded them. There are those who hold that children should have no books until long after they are ten years old. We do not propose to argue the question, but rather to give books their natural place in the expanding lives of the children we see about us.

Believing that there is no such person as "the average child" under ten years old, we are prepared to learn from children as

widely different and environed as Daisy Ashford and Miss Edgeworth's "Rosamond." Ever since "The Young Visiters" was published, we have wanted to pay tribute to Mrs. Ashford, or whoever was responsible for the preservation of the record of Daisy's spontaneity and lack of self-consciousness. Rosamond's mother would have persuaded her to consign the precious volume to the flames if she could have left her along long enough to get it written. There has never been the slightest doubt in our minds that Daisy Ashford wrote the book and wrote it when she was nine years old, spelling and all. We share Mr. Herford's feeling about Barrie's preface and tell everybody to read it last. The author, we think, need not have read many novels. The "Idear" was the thing and her unswerving development of it is an incentive to all who would write. Moreover, we look upon its publication, and the lively criticism attending it, as one more indication that we are entering upon a freer and more illuminating period of communication with childhood and children.

Is Hugh Walpole's "Jeremy" autobiographic? We do not know and we shall not press the question. We do know that he could not have written it without first putting himself in Jeremy's place. Of all the children we have lately found in books, Nicky and Michael in "The Tree of Heaven," and Mary Olivier seem to us to have been drawn by the most unerring hand. May Sinclair has made us think long and hard. It is high time the contemporary novelists who have the understanding and intuition began to create more child characters.

The publication of Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads" marked the discovery of childhood. Poverty and childhood emerged at the same time to claim their naturalization papers—in poetry, at the hands of Wordsworth; in prose, in the novels of Dickens. Too rarely, up to the present time, has a child been brought into a novel to take his place in life. It is a good omen for the novel as well as for education in general to have him enter. As early as 1902 the Swedish Government

had the foresight to commission the most distinguished novelist of the country to write a book for children. Selma Lagerlöf gave three years to the preparation of her background of scientific fact and poetic fancy for "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils." "Nils Holgersson" was written for Swedish children of nine years and older, but we know a little American girl between five and six who says she likes it better than any book she has ever heard read. We read "David Blaize and the Blue Door" to this same little girl and her sister "going on eight," down in the Blue Ridge Mountains, in September. Their younger sister, not yet "four years old" but "as wise," was captivated, as were the other two, by Mr. Ford's pictures, and she listened to parts of the story.

Friendship with David was established immediately. We know it would be with children. We took a week to read the book and could write a whole article about it, since Mr. Benson is quite manifestly one of the contemporary novelists who has been dipping back into the dreams and fancies,

the sense and nonsense, of his childhood.

The eldest of the three little girls is devoted to *Punch*, and has been for two or three years. Her interest in cartoons—she has been mercifully spared the "comics" of the Sunday newspapers—is suggestive. Why shouldn't some contemporary illustrators dip back into their childhood like the novelists? Tony Sarg's clever drawing for a very poor little story so charmed these children—who have a natural taste for the humor that emanates from the artist, regardless of text—as to suggest no end of possibilities.

In that fascinating life of Kate Greenaway, which should never be allowed to go out of print, there is a skit by Randolph Caldecott, done after the manner of Kate Greenaway, that is both amusing and revealing to children and grownups who like to look at pictures. There is also much evidence of Kate Greenaway's early delight in cartoons.

We began with the wisdom and the sense of beauty inherent in childhood, and we would end with a plea for humor. For

humor with some standard of imaginative conception, accuracy of drawing, and suitability of subject. We have long believed that humor should be given its due in the education of children. The solemnity of the process of education has made too easy the way that leads to the vulgarization of art and the prostitution of fancy. To the picture books, the cartoons, and the drawings—to which children under ten years old are exposed—no less surely than to imaginative writing, must we look for the development of that sound streak of humor which gets one behind "the Blue Door" at any age. Randolph Caldecott did not hang up the key to "the Blue Door" on the other side. He passed it on to Leslie Brooke of England, who still unlocks it for the children of America.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TWO LISTS OF BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

WE would by no means limit the reading of a given boy or girl to the books of this list or of any list of books for children. We would see to it that early connection is made with adult books, with histories, books of travel and exploration, natural histories, the sciences and the arts. Allowance must be made for a wide variation of taste among child readers, and for the capriciousness of childhood which frequently enjoys at a later period or under different circumstances the book rejected as "silly" or "not interesting."

The recently published letters of well-known authors concerning the books they read as children leave us with a stronger conviction than ever that the crucial point in any guidance of children's reading lies in having certain books at hand at the

psychological moment. It is a fatal thing, especially in New England, to delay the first reading of "Alice" to the reasoning years. Old England has always known this and has stood by the sense of nonsense in her nurseries. When Hugh Walpole learned to read by reading "Alice in Wonderland," he was asserting the natural right of childhood to choose for itself among the books at hand. No one who has read "Jeremy" will regret that "Alice" rather than "Jonas" was his choice.

In response to many inquiries from parents, and out of a varied experience in the suggestion of children's books as gifts, we have arranged two lists of books in an approximate order of purchase for a child or a family of children under ten years old. Many of the books will be read to children long before they are able to read for themselves. Herein lies the real opportunity of the parent or teacher who knows how to read nonsense in verse or prose, and has faith in the power and beauty of the English of the Bible, the great poets, and of such writers as Bunyan,

Defoe, Hawthorne, Stevenson and Kipling. The selection of titles has been made with the idea of giving right of way to literature and good drawing during the most impressionable years of life.

SOME FIRST BOOKS

THE FARMER'S BOY. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR WITH LINE DRAWINGS BY RANDOLPH CALDECOTT. FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.

We have given this book in paper covers, as a first picture book to many children between the ages of one and three. Fifteen more indispensable titles of old nursery rhymes will be found on its cover. The sixteen books may be had in boards in two or in four volumes.

MOTHER GOOSE. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY KATE GREENAWAY. FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.

That Kate Greenaway was a child psychologist as well as an artist, every young mother who studies her drawings will discover for herself. Her "Marigold Garden," "Under the Window," "The Pied

Piper," "A Apple Pie," and "A Day in a Child's Life" should be added very early to every child's library.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES. By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. ILLUSTRATED IN BLACK AND WHITE BY CHARLES ROBINSON. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

Kate Greenaway's child pictures and verses suggested to Stevenson the writing of his own verses for children.

SONGS OF INNOCENCE. By WILLIAM BLAKE. JOHN LANE CO.

"The most perfect expression of Blake's vision of life."—Scudder.

THE BIG BOOK OF NURSERY RHYMES. EDITED BY WALTER C. JERROLD. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR AND IN LINE DRAWING BY CHARLES ROBINSON. E. P. DUTTON AND CO.

This collection has been a favorite gift book for about fifteen years. It contains other verse than traditional Mother Goose melodies.

THE COMPLETE NONSENSE BOOK. By EDWARD LEAR. EDITED BY LADY STRACHEY, WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY LORD CROMER. DUFFIELD AND CO.

This edition contains "all the original pictures and verses together with new material," c. 1912.

THE POSY RING. A BOOK OF VERSE FOR CHILDREN. COMPILED BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN AND NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND CO.

We would add, with this collection, E. V. Lucas's "Book of Verses" in the more expensive of the two editions, published by Henry Holt and Co.

THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT. BY BEATRIX POTTER. FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.

The "little book" makes a distinct appeal to many children and no one has understood this better than Beatrix Potter. Her "Tailor of Gloucester" is a Christmas story.

THE STORY OF THE THREE BEARS. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR AND WITH LINE DRAWINGS BY L. LESLIE BROOKE. FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.

Leslie Brooke's "Three Bears," "Three Little Pigs," "Tom Thumb," his "Golden Goose," and his nursery rhymes are loved

by children of all ages. The books are published in paper covers and in boards.

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK. By HORACE E. SCUDDER. ILLUSTRATED. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.

"A collection of the best and most famous stories and poems in the English language."

THE BIBLE FOR CHILDREN. ARRANGED FROM THE KING JAMES VERSION. THE CENTURY CO.

THE FABLES OF ÆSOP. EDITED BY JOSEPH JACOBS. ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD HEIGHWAY. THE MACMILLAN CO.

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES. TRANSLATED BY MRS. EDWARD LUCAS. ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR RACKHAM. J. B. LIPPINCOTT CO.

There is a good edition of Grimm, edited by Lucy Crane, illustrated by Walter Crane, and published by the Macmillan Co.

ENGLISH FAIRY TALES. EDITED BY JOSEPH JACOBS. G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

Joseph Jacobs was a born storyteller as well as a student of folk lore. His renderings are characterized by humor and idiomatic English.

JUST SO STORIES. By RUDYARD KIPLING. ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND CO.

The "juvenile edition," larger in size, is more attractive to young children.

A SHORT HISTORY OF DISCOVERY. By HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY THE AUTHOR. DAVID MCKAY.

"This little book is an historical appetizer. . . . It merely says: Dear Children: History is the most fascinating and entertaining and instructive of arts."

THE SONG OF HIAWATHA. By HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERIC REMINGTON. HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN CO.

The childhood of Hiawatha will be familiar to children long before this book, with its fine pictures of American Indian life, is added to their library.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST PICTURE BOOK. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY WALTER CRANE. JOHN LANE CO.

While some young children are attracted by the strong color of the Walter Crane picture books, especially in paper

covers, the sumptuous settings and costumes make a more definite appeal to children already familiar with fairy tales.

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND. By LEWIS CARROLL. ILLUSTRATED BY SIR JOHN TENNIEL. THE MACMILLAN CO.

"Through the Looking Glass" may be had in a separate volume or bound with "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

DAVID BLAIZE AND THE BLUE DOOR. By E. F BENSON. GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY.

Like "Alice" this book is the story of a dream. The first chapter contains valuable information concerning imaginative boys under ten.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY, AND OTHER TALES FROM THE OLD FRENCH. RETOLD BY SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY EDMUND DULAC. GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY.

There are two editions of this fine collection. The larger and more expensive one contains more illustrations.

SELECT FABLES FROM LA FONTAINE. ADAPTED, AND ILLUSTRATED BY M. BOUTET DE MONVEL.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

JOAN OF ARC. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY M. BOUTET DE MONVEL. THE CENTURY CO.

The English edition of this wonderful book has just come back into print.

THE BROWNIES, THEIR BOOK. BY PALMER COX. THE CENTURY CO.

Palmer Cox studied children's interests so faithfully that his drawings are as popular as ever.

THE CHICKEN WORLD. BY E. BOYD SMITH. G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

Boyd Smith has done no better work than in this picture book which he made several years ago while living in France.

THE HAPPY HEART FAMILY. BY VIRGINIA GERSON. ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR. DUFFIELD AND CO.

A nonsense story, printed for little children as arranged by the artist-author.

JANE, JOSEPH AND JOHN. BY RALPH BERGENGREN. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY MAURICE E. DAY. ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS.

Ralph Bergengren's verses are modern but are childlike in spirit, a quality sustained by Maurice Day in his charming pictures of children at play.

SOME LATER BOOKS

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS. EDITED BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN AND NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY MAXFIELD PARRISH. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

A fuller selection of stories may be found in the collection edited by Frances Jenkins Olcott, and published by Henry Holt and Co.

THE JUNGLE BOOK. BY RUDYARD KIPLING. THE CENTURY CO.

The Second Jungle Book is published as a companion volume.

UNCLE REMUS; HIS SONGS AND HIS SAYINGS. BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS. ILLUSTRATED BY A. B. FROST. D. APPLETON AND CO.

The age at which children enjoy "Uncle Remus" varies with their distance from the South.

RIP VAN WINKLE. By WASHINGTON IRVING. ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR RACKHAM. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND CO.

Children should know this story before they are asked to read it as an assignment.

THE PETERKIN PAPERS. By LUCRETIA P. HALE. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.

The amusing adventures of a large family. We would like to add "The William Henry Letters" of Mrs. Diaz, but it is out of print.

PINOCCHIO, THE ADVENTURES OF A MARIONETTE. By CARLO LORENZINI. ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES COPELAND. GINN AND CO.

The best known and most popular of Italian fairy tales. The illustrations of the Italian original are fascinating to boys of all ages.

THE ROSE AND THE RING. By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR. G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

Children who have seen Tony Sarg's marionettes made after Thackeray's drawings will read the book at an earlier age and with keen perception of its charm.

THE WONDER BOOK. By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER CRANE. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.

"The Wonder Book" and "Tanglewood Tales" are included in the same volume in an edition illustrated by Maxfield Parrish.

THE HEROES. By CHARLES KINGSLEY. THE MACMILLAN CO.

Kingsley's fine text is worthy of a new and attractive edition.

THE ODYSSEY. TRANSLATED BY S. H. BUTCHER AND ANDREW LANG. THE MACMILLAN CO.

The best version from which to read aloud. "The Children's Homer" by Padraic Colum combines the story of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" in a form more attractive to children.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. By JOHN BUNYAN. ILLUSTRATED BY THE BROTHERS RHEAD. THE CENTURY CO.

The pictures accompanying this text invite more children to read "Pilgrim's Progress" than those of any other edition.

GOLDEN NUMBERS, A BOOK OF VERSE FOR YOUTH. COMPILED BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN AND NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND CO.

"The Blue Poetry Book," edited by Andrew Lang and published by Longmans, Green and Co., contains many ballads and is one of the few collections in which "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is to be found. Burton Stevenson's "Home Book of Verse for Young Folks," published by Henry Holt and Co., should also be given a place.

ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES. TRANSLATED BY MRS. EDGAR LUCAS. E. P. DUTTON AND CO.

The edition illustrated by T. C. and W. Robinson is the most attractive and satisfactory. There is a fine large edition translated by H. L. Braekstad, with illustrations by Hans Tegner and an introduction by Edmund Gosse, published by The Century Co.

IN THE DAYS OF GIANTS. BY ABBIE FARWELL BROWN. HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN CO.

The best introduction to Norse Myths for young readers.

THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF NILS. By SELMA LAGERLOF. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY MARY H. FRYE. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE AND CO.

A dream story with Sweden for a background. Written for children nine years old by Sweden's greatest living novelist. Asbjörnsen's "Fairy Tales from the Far North" is unfortunately out of print in the English edition. It is one of the most valuable of all collections of fairy tales.

A LITTLE BOY LOST. By W. H. HUDSON. ALFRED A. KNOPF.

A dream story with South America for its background. The kind of story that Hudson the naturalist felt he might have liked when a child. To be read aloud.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. By JONATHAN SWIFT. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY WILLY POGANY. THE MACMILLAN CO.

A preference is often expressed for the Cranford edition of Gulliver.

ROBINSON CRUSOE. By DANIEL DEFOE. ILLUSTRATED BY LOUIS AND FREDERICK RHEAD. HARPER AND BROS.

No illustrated edition of "Robinson Crusoe" has yet realized the possibilities suggested by the text.

THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON. By JOHANN DAVID WYSS. ILLUSTRATED BY LOUIS RHEAD. HARPER AND BROS.

There is no diminution in the popularity of the resourceful Swiss Family.

THE STORY OF ROLAND. By JAMES BALDWIN. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

We would always read from "The Song of Roland."

THE MERRY ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD. By HOWARD PYLE. ILLUSTRATED IN BLACK AND WHITE BY THE AUTHOR. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

The best prose rendering of Robin Hood.

THE BOY'S KING ARTHUR. EDITED BY SIDNEY LANIER. ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR BY N. C. WYETH. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

Howard Pyle's four large volumes may well be left to children over ten. The first and the last of the Pyle books are the best.

DON QUIXOTE OF THE MANCHA. By MIGUEL DE CERVANTES-SAAVEDRA. RETOLD BY JUDGE PARRY AND ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER CRANE. JOHN LANE CO.

Many children need Spanish background for the enjoyment of "Don Quixote."

THE BLUE FAIRY BOOK. EDITED BY ANDREW LANG. LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

A favorite collection with children of all ages. The versions of Andrew Lang are not so easy to read aloud as are those of other collections.

THE WONDER CLOCK, OR FOUR AND TWENTY MARVELLOUS TALES. ADAPTED BY HOWARD PYLE. ILLUSTRATED IN BLACK AND WHITE BY THE AUTHOR. HARPER AND BROS.

"Pepper and Salt" in its stories and verses, as well as by its pictures, appeals to children a little earlier than does "The Wonder Clock." Both collections should be included in a children's library.

AT THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND. BY GEORGE MACDONALD. ILLUSTRATED BY JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH. DAVID MCKAY.

"The Princess and the Goblin" and "The Princess and Curdie" are usually enjoyed by younger children than those who read of "Little Diamond" and

"North Wind." Josephine Daskam Bacon's tribute to George MacDonald in "On Our Hill" places these books admirably in relation to other fairy tales read to three children under ten.

THE GOLDEN SPEARS. By EDMUND LEAMY. DESMOND FITZGERALD.

This unusual collection of original Irish fairy tales is worthy of a setting more in keeping with its fine literary form.

GRANNY'S WONDERFUL CHAIR. By FRANCES BROWNE. ILLUSTRATED BY KATHARINE PYLE. E. P. DUTTON AND CO.

The charm of these old stories told by a blind poet extends to the children of to-day.

JACKANAPES. By JULIANA HORATIA EWING. ILLUSTRATED BY RANDOLPH CALDECOTT. SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

No modern edition can replace the one in which Caldecott pictured Jackanapes on Lollo's back racing over Goose Green.

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE. By CHARLES AND MARY LAMB. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

Some children prefer Shakespeare at first hand, but for those who do not, no rendering has approached this classic.

BONAPARTE. By Georges Montorgueil. Illustrated in Color by Job. Brentano's.

The universal interest aroused by this book and by the eight companion volumes of French history is indicative of what is needed in the presentation of history to children and young people. The books are all written by the same author, whose text has not been translated, but the striking feature of the books is their pictorial form. They are illustrated by different artists and are of the size of a small atlas with decorative colors. The books are unique in design and we suggest the purchase of at least one of them. We would add very early to a personal library for children, books illustrated by the best artists of Sweden, Russia, Holland, Japan, as well as of France. They are invaluable as a background for the folk tales, history, and geography of the countries.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A SPRING REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Rosy plum-tree, think of me
When Spring comes down the world!
HILDA CONKLING.

LITTLE did we think when we were daring enough to propose a spring review of books for children that we should come upon anything so altogether charming and unusual as Hilda Conkling's "Poems by a Little Girl." Only the other day we had said of modern poetry that it had little to say of childhood or to children. Yet here is a book of poems instinct with the spirit of childhood and so child-like in much of its phrasing as to make a direct and permanent appeal to children and grown people. Moreover, the work is unmistakably that of a child whose

nature is rarely understood by the mother to whom the little book is dedicated:

I have a dream for you, Mother,
Like a soft thick fringe to hide your eyes.
I have a surprise for you, Mother,
Shaped like a strange butterfly.
I have found a way of thinking
To make you happy;
I have made a song and a poem
All twisted into one.
If I sing, you listen;
If I think, you know.
I have a secret from everybody in the world full
of people
But I cannot always remember how it goes;
It is a song
For you, Mother,
With a curl of cloud and a feather of blue
And a mist
Blowing along the sky.
If I sing it some day, under my voice,
Will it make you happy?

Hilda Conkling lives in Emily Dickinson's country and one recognizes the flowers and grass, the birds and butterflies, the trees, the sky and something of the star shine. Hilda has just passed her ninth birthday and ever since she was a

very little girl she has "told" her songs and verses to her mother, who wrote them down without Hilda's knowledge. Those who have had intimate and continuous knowledge of children in whom the poetic instinct and feeling for language were strong between the ages of four and six, will feel the universality of these earlier verses:

There's dozens full of dandelions
Down in the field.
Little gold plates,
Little gold dishes in the grass,
I cannot count them
But the fairies know every one.

Sparkle up, little tired flower
Leaning in the grass!
Did you find the rain of night
Too heavy to hold?

There is going to be the sound of bells
and murmuring.
This is the brook dance;
There is going to be sound of voices,
And the smallest will be the brook;
It is the song of water
You will hear.

Fairies and the Sandman appear and reappear in earlier and later verses. The play spirit of music, art, and literature finds its way out-of-doors. There is a lovely dream of fairies on the mountain tops, reminiscent of Allingham's Fairies. "I went to sea in a glass-bottomed boat" is so perfect a description as to make one wonder it is composed from a dream or out of a real experience. Was ever geography made so fascinating?

GEOGRAPHY

I can tell balsam trees
By their grayish bluish silverish look of smoke.
Pine trees fringe out.
Hemlocks look like Christmas.
The spruce tree is feathered and rough
Like the legs of the red chickens in our poultry yard.
I can study my geography from chickens
Named for Plymouth Rock and Rhode Island,
And from trees out of Canada.
No; I shall leave the chickens out.
I shall make a new geography of my own.
I shall have a hillside of spruce and hemlock
Like a separate country,
And I shall mark a walk of spires on my map,
A secret road of balsam trees

With blue buds.
Trees that smell like a wind out of fairy-land
Where little people live
Who need no geography
But trees.

In her informing and appreciative introduction to "Poems by a Little Girl," Amy Lowell has paid warm tribute to "the stuff and essence of poetry that this book contains," to Hilda Conkling's power of observation and gift of imagination, and to the tact and understanding of her mother. She admits Hilda goes to school, but warns instructors to keep "hands off" and gives thanks that Hilda has never been "for hours at a time in contact with an elementary intelligence."

We read the introduction after we had read the poems because we wanted to know what we thought about the book and its author from quite a different standpoint. We have been haunted ever since by persistent memories in word or phrase of the children of an East Side public school in New York City, a school as rarely fortunate in its principal whose love

of beautiful English and good music has pervaded it for many years, as Hilda Conkling in her remarkable mother. These poems belong by every natural right to such children and to all children, but we would like to pass on the book without the portrait of Hilda Conkling which appears as a frontispiece and without other introduction than a simple foreword written by Hilda's mother. Such treatment, in our judgment, would go far toward answering some of the questions Miss Lowell has raised concerning authorship in childhood, and creating a more understanding conception of the difference between *teaching* and *educating* children in any environment.

Miss Lowell has well said that Hilda Conkling is "subconscious" rather than "self-conscious." We think the chances are good that she will remain so if the incentive to good work is held steadily behind the poetic endowment in her own experience and in that of her less gifted contemporaries, who will be the true appraisers of her work in years to come.

While we were still lingering so delightedly over "Poems by a Little Girl" as not to care who wrote them or why, we received proofs of an enlarged American edition of Marie L. Shedlock's "Eastern Stories and Legends" and read with a new sense of its meaning the beautiful story of the Banyan Deer.

In rearranging and expanding this selection of stories from the Buddha Rebirths, Miss Shedlock has wisely freed the book from limitations, which in the earlier edition gave it too much the appearance of a text-book to look readable. In so doing she has preserved the classical rendering and the eastern point of view of one of the foremost of Oriental scholars—Rhys Davids—who wrote the foreword to the collection and assisted her personally in getting the atmosphere of the stories.

The notes for teachers, which now appear at the back of the book, are charged with the same wisdom, clarity of expression, and recognition of the power of a dramatic rather than a didactic presentation, which characterize Miss Shedlock's

treatment of story-telling in "The Art of the Story-teller"—a book that May Sinclair says should be on the desk of every writer of stories. It is, we consider, the best book on the subject of story-telling and contains a fine selection of stories from authoritative sources. Miss Shedlock first became known in America through her dramatic interpretation of the stories of Hans Christian Andersen, some twenty years ago. Since then, she has become more familiarly known in her own country, the United States, and Canada, as "The Fairy Godmother." She has recently returned to England after five years of story-telling in this country and in Canada; and the revision and enlargement of the "Eastern Stories and Legends" grew out of her experiences of telling "The Tree Spirit," "The True Spirit of a Festival Day," "The Earth is Falling In" and other stories from the collection, to audiences of children and grown people.

We know of no book we can so confidently recommend to persons who insist upon stories with an ethical significance.

"These stories of the 'Buddha Rebirths,'" says the editor, "are not for one age or one country, but for all time, and for the whole world. Their philosophy might be incorporated into the tenets of faith of a League of Nations without destroying any national forms of religious teaching." In its new and more attractive form the book should appeal to a wide circle of readers, including boys and girls in their teens.

From England there has recently come as a gift from Ethel Sidgwick to the Children's Room of the New York Public Library, an "Ancient Mappe of Fairyland," newly discovered and set forth by Bernard Sleigh.

This unique map is in color, measuring five feet or more in length by about twenty inches. Children and grown people are completely fascinated by it. "Isn't it great?" exclaimed a boy of twelve. "There's Rockabye Baby square on the treetop, The Three Blind Mice, Humpty Dumpty sitting on that long wall, and down here are King Arthur's Knights, the Sea King's Palace, Dreamland Harbour,

and the Argonauts. There's the Rainbow Bridge, Hansel and Gretel—everything and everybody you ever read about in Mother Goose, Fairy Tales, or Mythology."

We are showing this map on a long table covered with glass. It might, of course, be shown on the wall, although not quite so effectively. A map of Fairyland should prove of great interest to schools as well as to libraries.

With an advance set of the beautiful color plates from Italian Primitives, illustrating Mrs. Richard Henry Dana's "The Story of Jesus" comes assurance that this book, which is to be sold by subscription, will be available in April. The American edition of Boutet de Monvel's "Joan of Arc" has not yet appeared, and no date is now stated by its publishers.

Dorothy Canfield's "History of France for Young Folks" is again postponed. "Hero Stories of France" by Eva March Tappan is announced as a spring publication, and although we have not seen the text, we are confident that Miss Tappan

has made a contribution to our limited resources in the history of France.

Histories of the Pilgrims are making their way from the presses of more than one publisher, but we have not read any of them. We hope to find one of more lively interest to children than Roland Usher's of last year.

We may as well make open confession that from this point on we have read none of the books we mention or fail to mention, since we had no opportunity to see them, even in galleys. De Wolfe Howe, on a recent visit, described very graphically "A Little Gateway to Science" by Edith M. Patch, who is, he says, "a trained entomologist endowed with a charming gift of writing for children." The twelve sketches of six-footed insects which make up this book are illustrated by Robert T. Sim. "Americans by Adoption," is a volume of biographical sketches of eminent Americans by Joseph Husband. The latter book for "more mature readers, but still young, is designed especially for use in connection with the Americanization

work now going on throughout the country."

James Willard Schultz has entered the field of Boy Scout stories with "In the Great Apache Forest." The book is announced as an Indian story, a Boy Scout story, a Forest Service story and a war story of to-day—all in one. We shall be interested to see how Mr. Schultz meets the demands of the situation. William Heyliger's "Don Strong American" is the third and final volume in the series to which it belongs.

Edmund L. Pearson has written a "Life of Roosevelt" for "The True Stories of Great Americans Series."

Thornton Burgess called one day on his way to the Philadelphia Book Fair and gave an interesting forecast of his book about animals, which is to appear in the autumn, as a companion volume to "The Burgess Bird Book." The illustrations are to be made by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and the book promises to fill an every day need not supplied to this generation by "Wood's Natural History." Mr. Burgess reminded

us that as none of his animals ever come to a tragic end and his stories are written without effort or boredom on his part, we may expect them to flow on and on. "Bowser, the Hound" is the title of a volume announced for publication this spring.

"Why announce a spring review of children's books when children's books are published in the fall—too late very often for review before Christmas?" A critical reader of the circular announcing the new Juvenile Department of *The Bookman* asked this question last July. To which we then replied that we liked the sight and the sound and the idea of a spring review of children's books. Moreover, we had been pursued for years by constant and persistent inquiries for new books for children at Easter and just before the summer holidays. We had never seen such a spring review as we then pictured writing, but we thought it worth trying, at least once—just for the fun of the thing. Are we down-hearted?" Not in the least, although our telephone has responded like a Ouija board to "traditions of the trade."

Why, we have asked, should we go on treating children's books like Christmas toys? Why shouldn't more of them be published in the spring and accorded more individual consideration as *books*, then, and at other seasons of the year? We are not in the least convinced by any of the reasons given for sustaining the present system. It holds too many limitations for authors, artists, readers, librarians, booksellers, and publishers who are interested in a larger distribution and a freer, more intelligent use of children's books in our own country and in other countries.

That the holiday trade will continue to hold its place as a big factor in the production of books for children in this country and in England, we have no doubt. That it should continue to dominate and restrict the field of writing, illustrating, and distribution of books, for children and young people in the twentieth century, is inconceivable in the face of new conditions and relationships with other countries and a larger understanding of our own needs and the power of books—real books

—to interpret and satisfy them. The expression of our interest in foreign affairs and in economics and industrial problems has been too exclusively the concern of text-books, with all the limitations imposed upon the text-book from time immemorial. The bulk of publications for the use of children and young people in the late winter and early spring takes the form of text-books. The reason for this is obvious, but there is a larger interest at stake and we would urge its claim—the inculcation of a love of reading for its own sake by exposure to books at all times and seasons.

A few weeks ago we were asked by the American Ambassador to Brazil to select five or six hundred books to be used as the nucleus of a library in a school in Rio de Janeiro. The school was already supplied with text-books; the children attending it were of American and English parentage. *Real books* were wanted, with an emphasis on the pictorial in the best sense of the word. The books chosen must range in their appeal from a liberal supply of pic-

ture books for the little children, to such books as Captain Scott's "Last Expedition" and Hudson Stuck's "Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled" for boys of fifteen.

Many of the books we wanted to recommend were out of print. For many countries and characters there is no illuminating literature in print for children and young people. Whenever we are asked to evaluate a selection of children's books to be sent out of the country, we realize afresh how little we have to offer in travel, history, and biography; how deadly dull many of these books are and how great is the need of the children of our own land for just such books as we are trying to find for children in South America, Norway, Sweden, France, or Belgium. These countries, and still more distant ones, are asking some very important questions when their educators and ambassadors take time to concern themselves with the selection of books for children. They ask for books to "enlarge the understanding, deepen the sympathies and with a strong appeal to the imagination of children." Such ques-

tions cannot be answered by holiday announcements nor by primers of information. It is going to take a long time to answer them wisely and well. Hope lies in the multiplication of such responses as this which has just reached us from a well-known publishing house: "You may certainly count upon our interest and coöperation in bringing out books of value to children of all countries."

CHAPTER NINE

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Time, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

RALPH HODGSON.

WHEN one writes a novel about grown people he knows exactly where to stop; but when he writes of juveniles he must stop where best he can." So wrote Mark Twain in his conclusion to "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" in the year 1876.

Forty-four years have brought many changes to the novel about grown people. Authors are no longer as sure of where to stop or where to begin. The middle-aged heroine has come into her own. The hero has too often seen his best days. Technique has driven many a hard bargain

with imagination. With a few notable exceptions novels of the twentieth century are being written for a sophisticated middle-aged audience.

"Is 'Jeremy' a book we can discuss at a club meeting?" (The club, we learn, is composed of more or less intellectual women whose children are grown up or non-existent.) "We have just discussed Galsworthy's 'Saint's Progress', but a child character would be too simple for discussion, wouldn't it? There would be no problems. 'Jeremy' remains a child, doesn't he? We are tired of discussing Wells. We had thought about 'Mary Olivier'—she does grow up, I know; but we hesitate over May Sinclair. So you really think Booth Tarkington's books about boys are to be taken seriously? I can't imagine boys reading them. Girls too. Why 'Seventeen' especially? I have always thought of them as written merely for the entertainment of grown people. Has he written anything we could discuss or is everything from too youthful and romantic a standpoint?

"I have always supposed it much easier to write for boys and girls in their 'teens than for grown people or children—after the author got used to it. You think it isn't. Yes, I know boys and girls of fifteen and sixteen are very critical, but they are so capricious and they have no sound judgment of books. How can they with no experience of life?

"You think a vision of life and a passion for reading may carry them a long way? Who knows? Well, if you can't think of a recent book for our club discussion, won't you suggest a subject? 'Back to Youth with the Novel'? Why, yes, I believe that would be different from anything we've ever taken up and it might remind us of books we've forgotten. How far back? Would you begin with Defoe or Sir Walter Scott? With Mark Twain, really? I never think of Mark Twain as a novelist—just a humorist. So 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Huckleberry Finn' are really histories of boy life in the eighteen-forties. Aldrich's 'Tom Bailey' always seemed to me so much *safer* for a boy to read. Not

very popular with the boys of to-day? Why not, I wonder? After all you've said, I really think we should give serious consideration to 'Penrod' and 'Seventeen.'

"I don't know the girls' books so well. I can think of only two girl characters, Jo March in 'Little Women' and 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.' But I'm afraid the club would seriously object to Miss Alcott's English. I am really surprised you don't object to it. I had supposed librarians were more particular about English than anything else. To be sure I never thought about it when I was reading 'Little Women,' but the question has been raised by so many literary critics. Miss Alcott *is* dramatic and human, of course. *Russian* girls read her books? How singular?

"Why doesn't Kate Douglas Wiggin write another book for girls? She is so clever and original and has all the background from which to write for the girl of to-day.

"I'm surprised that you can suggest no other girl characters unless, as you say,

we go back to Jane Eyre or Maggie Tulliver.

"Has there really never been a fine story of school life for girls in England or America—a story corresponding to 'Tom Brown's School Days'? I hadn't realized the significance of the lack of it. Even a book like 'Joan and Peter' can hardly make up for it. Will you promise to come to the final meeting and tell us what books—especially novels—from 'Robinson Crusoe' to 'Jeremy' are popular with boys and girls in their 'teens?"

I promised. For next to the children under ten years old who are forming their first intimate associations with books, I have always felt nearest to these older boys and girls who are unconsciously seeking in romance, in mystery, in poetry, in history, in philosophy, and in reality substitutes for the fairy and folk tales the legends, myths, and hero tales, the wild adventure, and the true or fictitious narratives belonging to early childhood.

I am inclined to place less stress on the choice of books made by boys and girls

between the ages of ten and fourteen if they have been naturally and continuously exposed to a liberal selection of good literature in their earlier years. Between the ages of eleven and thirteen there frequently occurs a reading craze which is the despair of many parents and teachers and full of opportunity for the librarian. It is a time of ranging over a great variety of subjects to see what they are like—pirates, smugglers, Indians, treasure-seekers, boys of unfailing courage and resource, girls in strange cities, girls at boarding-school, girls at home, are all on the near horizon. So, too, are, or may be, some of the great characters in fiction and in real life.

I shall have more to say of these "middle-aged children" and their multitudinous interests in reading in a future article. They were the dominant element in the children's libraries of the 1890's and early 1900's. It is largely on certain of their known tastes and preferences and on a tradition of what has been considered suitable for "youth" handed down from the old moral tales and the Sunday School

libraries of the first half of the nineteenth century that the present schemes for juvenile publications, designed to cover the period from eight to eighteen years old, have been based.

These schemes betray their origin. They are built around the series idea with all its limitations for author, publisher, and reader. I shall not now discuss the series in relation to boys and girls under fourteen years of age. I do not fully share the prejudice against it that is sometimes expressed, provided the work is well sustained. But it is an affront to the intelligence of young people from fourteen to eighteen to allow the series idea to be the determining factor in the production of a literature designed for their reading. It is inevitable that it should result in just such a state of arrested development as we find to-day. It has been said that childhood and poverty emerged at the same time to claim their naturalization papers—in poetry at the hands of Wordsworth, in prose in the novels of Dickens.

The discovery of adolescence has not yet

been declared in corresponding terms, but all clearly recollected experience concerning it indicates that it is a period of greater expansion, of livelier interests, of deeper emotions, of greater sensitiveness, of stronger appreciations and of keener critical perceptions than any other period of life. Thomas Hughes, Louisa Alcott, Mark Twain, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Booth Tarkington, Rudyard Kipling, E. F. Benson and May Sinclair have given varied and eloquent testimony concerning life at this period. Since the Brontës there has been no such unveiling of the inner life of a girl and woman as in "Mary Olivier." Writers of girl's books and mothers of girls who are still growing up may well look to it for the clarification of many hazy views respecting the character of girls and women. Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë" is one of the books May Sinclair read as a child with much skipping, she says. That "Mary Olivier" was not written for children nor for girls in their 'teens we may feel confident. I think it would have interest only for a very un-

usual young girl, such as May Sinclair herself must have been, but I also think it may come to be considered one of the strongest forces for the liberation of truer girl characters in fiction for young people; it bears so clear a stamp that what a girl really *is*—not what she is made to seem to be—determines her destiny, whatever her inheritance or environment.

There have been very few liberated characters in fiction for young people in the forty odd years since the publication of "Tom Sawyer." Authors have stopped where they have been quite plainly told to stop rather than "where best they can." There has been too much tinkering of stories in offices. Old properties have been revamped by somebody who remembers what he liked at the age of twelve and "how mature" he, or his brother, was; and who decides the skeleton can be set up in a series designed for boys of fourteen to eighteen if the plot is up to date and scientific, or if mechanical information is accurate and abundant.

The school athletic story, whose most

successful exponent is Ralph Henry Barbour, was a new type of story with considerable promise. It was overdone and lost its first distinction and originality of theme. Mr. Barbour's earlier stories, such as "The Half-Back" and "The Crimson Sweater," are the popular ones to-day. His versatility has led him into the field of the adventure story. It is perhaps too soon to predict the degree of success. It would be possible to mention a considerable number of competent writers who have either become martyrs to the series idea or have turned completely away from the juvenile field.

Books dealing with historical periods, if the material is ample, and the author capable of making dramatic use of it, suffer less from the projection into a series than do characters supposed to be living their own lives. This is notably true of the work of Joseph Altsheler. Mr. Altsheler wrote out of interest in his subject, never with a definite age in mind. His books are read by many men as well as by boys of different ages.

Kirk Munro's best work was in his individual books rather than in his series.

The absurdity of expecting an author or a group of authors to produce six, or eight, or a dozen books of a defined species for the reading of young people between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, has long been apparent to the young people themselves. The series interest is at its height between eleven and thirteen, and by fourteen or fifteen has been replaced by a very persistent desire for romance, detective stories, historical novels, stories of the sea, authentic books of exploration and discovery, etc., so written as to absorb the reader.

This desire has been met in the children's libraries with which I have been connected for many years by a liberal selection of novels written for adults—placed upon the shelves of the children's rooms. I have always believed in educating such parents as may be unthinking, or even unwilling, to allow their daughters to take their first impressions of love from novels which seem to follow nat-

urally the old fairy tales, the medieval legends and the classical tales. Fortunate the girl who passes, in her own good time, from "The Sleeping Beauty" to the stories of Atalanta, Brunhilde, Guinevere, and "Aucassin and Nicolette"; and from these to "The Scarlet Letter," "The Mill on the Floss," "Pride and Prejudice," or "Cranford"—as Anne Thackeray conceived of it, "a kind of visionary country home"; "The Brushwood Boy," "Monsieur Beaucaire," and her own free choice of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and other authors.

The made-to-order series with its girl bride and its up-to-date boy hero seems very insipid after any such vision and foreshadowing of what love is going to be.

What is true of the love story is true also of the mystery, the detective story, and the tale of pure adventure for both boys and girls. When the interest is strongest they should be able to put their hands on the books written by masters of the art. Poe is better known since the boys discovered Conan Doyle's tribute to him as master of the mystery story. Wilkie

Collins, Quiller-Couch, Stevenson's "New Arabian Nights," "Island Nights Entertainments," and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" are all much read. Dumas is without doubt the most popular of the novelists read by the older boys.

No one who has watched two generations pass into their 'teens and has held any large and continuous observation of life at earlier and later periods, feels like minimizing the value of impressions which may then be taken from books. But it is a time, not for prohibitions and restrictions hedged about with sentimentality and cheap optimism; it is a time for throwing wide the gates if any have been set up. Literature—great literature—can be trusted to do its own work, and one who hopes for large returns should make no unsought recommendations. Too many books have been killed for young readers by over-zealous recommendation.

It is plain that neither an age limit nor a series limit will ever command the service of writers who have the imagination, the wisdom, the sincerity, the charm, and

the distinction of style which are essential qualifications of the successful writer of books for young people. One, if not both, of two things is sure to happen. The novel will recover its sense of youth, —it is written in the history of the novel that it must,—or the writer for young people must enlarge the boundaries by escaping from the series and the age limit when entering the competition to write the "real thing" for the 'teens. In "High Benton," William Heyliger has taken a long step forward in this direction. There may be a sequel to "High Benton" but the book is clearly not one of a series. It bears all the marks of sincerity and intimate continuous knowledge of boy nature. Moreover, it is a school story of a new type dealing with the everyday life of a boy at High School who is tempted to leave school and go to work before finishing his course. Never has the village loafer, full of superstition and unbelief in education, been better drawn than in the character of old Todd, the jitney man, in his relation to a group of boys. One feels

an integrity of background in the book. The author knows the environment he has re-created and deals with actual problems of boy life with uncommon freedom and naturalness. Mr. Heyliger's earlier books, school stories and scout stories, have been very popular with boys and are characterized by their emphatic presentation of "fair play." From a second reading of "High Benton" I went back to "Tom Brown's School Days"—beginning where so many boys do, with chapter five, and reading the first chapters after I had finished the story. It would be difficult to picture a sharper contrast than is presented by the life of an English boy at Rugby in the 1830's and an American boy in a New Jersey public school in 1919, but I think I have never read "Tom Brown" with so strong a sense of his kinship to the boy life of all time. "Tom Brown's School Days" often requires introduction and a judicious amount of skipping, but I have never known a boy who really read it not to like it. I often read it in conjunction with "Huckleberry Finn"

—another sharp contrast provocative of many questions concerning the nature of boys who lived in the same era, for Mark Twain places Huck on the Mississippi at about the same period that Thomas Hughes entered Rugby.

From "Tom Brown" I came back to "David Blaize" and what a fascinating, moving story of English school life it is, carrying David from the age of eleven to seventeen. The book is perhaps too subjective for the American boy even in his later 'teens, but it is a revealing book to all who know much or little about boys. The chapter descriptive of David "changing his skin" under the yew tree in the garden, with his sister Margery standing by, is I think the best account of boy and girl adolescence I have ever read. The mysterious attics and the gurgling cistern, the dark corners and the frightening games belong to my own childhood with a brother whose imagination was very like David's. The visit of David's father—the Archdeacon—to the school is a perfect bit out of English family life. David

at seventeen, and in love for the first time, is free from the self-consciousness of William Sylvanus Baxter at seventeen, but remember how differently he was situated. I turned to "Seventeen" to refresh my own memory and also to contrast the story of Willie Baxter with "Betty Bell." "Betty Bell" is very well written, but the incident is too circumscribed and the characters too restricted to invite a second reading. "Betty Bell is a regular little flirt, and that's all she does do," commented a girl of fifteen who read the book recently. Rereading "Seventeen" in the light of its growing popularity with girls of fifteen and sixteen, I am struck by its peculiar value for girls of that age and older. Life is touched by perspective as well as tinged with humor. Where is there such another mother in a book as Mrs. Baxter, yet how well one seems to know her! While "Penrod" is the more popular book in the children's rooms of the libraries,—and contrary to all prediction it is very popular,—"Seventeen" is being read more and more by both boys and girls.

Those who have read "Master Simon's Garden" know that Cornelia Meigs writes with charm and knowledge of "the long sea road" from New England to China. In "The Pool of Stars" she has told the story of a girl who gives up a trip to Bermuda with a rich aunt in order to get ready for college. She spends an interesting summer and makes a charming friendship with a boy of her own age, and an older woman who is the daughter of a dreamy old inventor. There is a mystery and a most successful story within a story. A chapter to which boys would listen with delight since it gives color and life to that period of our history following the war with the Barbary pirates, "The Tree of Jade," is so well told as to completely reconcile the reader to the interruption of the main narrative.

Ruth Sawyer ought to be writing for the girls who enjoyed "The Primrose Ring." "Doctor Danny" is a partial answer to this appeal since it contains several stories which are very much liked by

older girls, but they will not rest content with short stories.

The final meeting of the club at which the popular novels from "Robinson Crusoe" to "Jeremy" are to be enumerated has not yet come off, but I am going to anticipate it in so far as to remind the readers of *The Bookman* that "Robinson Crusoe," after two hundred years, is more read than ever it was. Older boys are deeply impressed when told that it is the first humanized adventure story. Many of them have read it when they were younger as if it were history or biography.

Between "Robinson Crusoe" and "Treasure Island" lie one hundred and sixty-four years, and the increasing popularity of "Treasure Island" testifies to fresh delight in adventure for its own sake in a second generation of boy readers. There has been no more striking growth of the popularity of an author not accounted a juvenile than is evidenced by the circulation of Stevenson from the children's rooms of the libraries during the

past twelve years. Between Defoe and Stevenson stands Sir Walter Scott. "Ivanhoe" is one hundred years old this very year, and wherever the schoolboy reads it in advance of assignment he is still held captive.

"I am, I own," wrote Sir Walter, "no great believer in the moral utility to be derived from fictitious composition." When we remember that he lived in an age of moralists, we may take heart for the writers of our own time. It is clear that those who would write for young people in the 1920's must come to the task with more first-hand knowledge of their readers and the books they are actually reading; nor is it far to seek. I know of no more inspiring or inspiriting pageant than that unconsciously set by hundreds and thousands of new readers of fine books, whose authors have passed on, but whose work remains—a light to the men and women who strike out new paths or who follow in old ways.

CHAPTER TEN

VACATION READING

Hark, the empty highways crying
"Who'll beyond the hills away?"

A. E. HOUSMAN.

I'M not going to read a single book all summer!" The boy of sixteen who made this announcement in the summer of 1917 was driving a spirited horse over one of those willow-fringed roads which lead back from the New Hampshire coast through a lovely inland country. "You see," he continued, after waiting in vain for expostulation or comment, "I've already read three books from that old list (a long list furnished by one of the large preparatory schools of the country) and I don't have to read more than three."

"Don't you by any chance want to read a book that is not on the list?" I inquired.

"No, I don't think of any. If I should *come across* another book as good as 'Ivanhoe' I'd read it. I read 'Ivanhoe' four times before I ever saw it on a list. When I called for another, just as good, father handed me 'Quentin Durward' and 'The Talisman,' but I couldn't get interested in either of them. Anyway I'm sick of looking at print. Can you stand a road full of thank-you-ma'ams?" I could and did. Books were forgotten in the enchantment of that wood-road nor did we speak of them again during a week of perfect June weather, for I too have been often "sick of looking at print," and quite content as child and grownup to go on from one vacation day to another without opening a book until one day I chance to come upon something I can't resist.

On such a day—a morning in early June—I had been sent to dust a guest-room and place some roses there. Throwing wide the windows, I proceeded to my task only as far as a table on which lay a little green-covered book I had never noticed before—"The Vision of Sir Laun-

ful." I read it through three times, and then I walked straight out into that June day—dusting and flowers forgotten—down through the apple orchard and on across open fields to a sunny pasture, there to drop down on a great flat stone beside a brook with the poem in full possession of me. The printed book had been left far behind—it so often is—nor did I feel the desire to repeat any of the lines. The beauty of the poem had shot through my consciousness and stirred a new sense of wonder and delight in a perfect June day. I was twelve years old that summer and had such an anthology as "Golden Numbers"—with its "Chanted Calendar," "Green Things Growing," "On the Wing" and all its other invitations to read poetry for the pure joy of the experience—been in existence, I might now be looking back upon it as one of my vacation books. But Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Smith had not yet begun to make summer and winter holiday with their "Posy Ring," their "Tales of Laughter," and "Tales of Wonder." Even "Timo-

thy's Quest," so true to the spirit of childhood and to the life of a near-by township, was still to be written.

The visitors who came to stay in the guest-room brought with them copies of Sarah Orne Jewett's "Deephaven" and another book of her short stories. One of these stories—whose title I've forgotten—I still recall with a strong sense of its reality; and the impression it left with me that the lives of people who lived up and down the country roads over which I so often drove with my father, might have just such stories behind them.

That stories could be lived as well as dreamed I was now sure. Even as a child I felt this quality in Miss Jewett, the gift of giving back "the very life" as Kipling tells her in a letter about "The Country of the Pointed Firs." "So many people of lesser sympathy," he reminds her, "have missed the lovely New England landscape and the genuine New England nature. I don't believe even you know how good that work is."

The short story * I remember so clearly is that of an elderly New England woman facing the necessity of giving up her old home. Surprised by the visit of a nephew and his family, she conceals her distress of mind by a camouflage of baking powder biscuits and hot gingerbread. As she puts the tins into the oven, she remembers that she has given the last drop of cream she had in the house as well as the last bit of pound cake to a little girl who had come early in the afternoon in the hope of finding some work to do in her summer vacation. Since she had to disappoint the child she must offer consolation of some kind—cream and pound cake vanished. Moreover she expressed no regret, but cheerfully rose to meet the present emergency by crossing the railway track to fetch a fresh pitcher of cream. On her return a train stood in her path. Hastily mounting the steps to the platform she was about to descend on the other side when the train began to move; and bareheaded, holding her pitcher of cream, the

* The Late Supper in "Old Friends and New."

hospitable soul presently finds herself inside a Pullman car, speeding on to a distant station. Of course, she finds some one in need of cream. This time it is not a child but the invalid aunt of the young lady who lends her a "fascinator" and money for the return ticket. A few days later these travelers solve their problem as well as hers by coming to stay with her for the summer. The little girl is engaged to run errands and wash dishes, and the reader is left with an all-pervading sense of the kindliness of the world beyond New England, from which the travelers came, as well as with a delightful picture of that true hospitality which takes no account of age or station in life and is to be found alike in Old England and New England. Years later I was reminded of this story by certain chapters in "Cranford"—that "visionary country home" of Anne Thackeray Ritchie "which," she says, "I have visited all my life long (in spirit) for refreshment and change of scene."

"But will the girl of to-day read any-

thing so slow as 'Cranford' or those charming stories of Miss Jewett—'The Queen's Twin,' 'A White Heron,' or 'The Country of the Pointed Firs'?" Not always, but I have so often shared my delight in these stories with groups of girls who have just begun to connect "Little Women" with the life of Louisa Alcott as they know it in a book, and "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" with Kate Douglas Wiggin, as they have listened to her reading of her "Child's Journey with Dickens," that my faith is very strong in the natural appreciation of the girl of to-day provided she is not urged to read any given book. Put fine books in her way. Let her, in so far as may be, discover for herself those which seem to belong to her and in her own good time let her give testimony concerning them. There will be depths as well as heights in her reading as in her brother's. The perfect June day on which I discovered "The Vision of Sir Launfal" was succeeded by several rainy ones in which I discovered a barrelful of *The New York Ledger* and *Golden Days* stored away in

an attic, and from the village library I read, surreptitiously, "St. Elmo," "Barriers Burned Away," and "Tempest and Sunshine." The latter was among the first of my "favorite novels of a brief period." I read most of the books written by Horatio Alger, Oliver Optic, Elijah Kellogg and other popular writers for boys. That the reading of all these books and many more "did me no harm," I can state with no such assurance as do the fathers of many boys I have known. Nor is such negative testimony of much value in the preparation of lists of vacation reading. We are slow to remember that with certain notable exceptions the children's books loved by one generation are rarely loved by the next. Poetry and fairy tales and some few stories live on with little change, but every generation claims its popular authors for both boys and girls.

It is a wise parent, scout leader, or camp counselor who reads books already in the hands of boys and girls before making a selection for his summer home or camp.

Moreover, he must read with a forward as well as a backward look, if he would inspire continuous interest and respect for his judgment of books and his discernment of their appeal to the personalities of his prospective readers. No list, however carefully prepared, registers this last all-important element. Nothing short of give-and-take reading and discussion of books with children and young people will ever supply it; and no time is more favorable for such interchange than the rainy morning, the hot afternoon, or the cool night of a summer holiday.

Fortunate is the public library that stands at the meeting of vacation ways, and receives on return of its books lent for vacation reading first-hand evidence to show how these same books "got over" to boys and girls all the way from Maine to California—from Canada to Florida. Such evidence is invaluable in giving life and color to the selection of books at any season, and there has grown up in the summer city of New York as a result of it a kind of tradition that vacation reading is

as much fun as anything else. That it has taken a natural place among summer sports and amusements there was convincing evidence in the summer of 1916, when children under sixteen years old were deprived of the privileges of the public library by the Health Department for a period of nearly three months. "First the movies closed, now the library. Gee! they'll be keeping us out of the river next!" exclaimed a boy on returning his books to one of the branch libraries near the Harlem river. The motion-picture houses reopened early in September for the admission of children of twelve years and older. No sooner did this become known than the boys and girls flocked to the libraries in all parts of the city. Great was their disappointment and surprise not to be admitted there. Although it was known that the public schools would not be open until the last week in September, it was popularly rumored "If the movies, why not the libraries?" "I'm so *lonesome* for books," pleaded a little Russian girl, to be echoed by thousands of others

from the Battery to the Bronx. Even the patrons of large and popular private collections of "Motor Boys," "Aviator Girls," "Elsie books," and "Alger books" had become bored. "The books we had were all alike," they said as they stretched out eager hands for the Lang Fairy Books, for Mark Twain, Howard Pyle and Stevenson, for Altsheler, Louisa Alcott, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Paul Du Chaillu and other authors not to be found in second-hand shops, on push-carts, or in the possession of their friends. The owner of one of these private libraries, who had been lending from it generously, appeared at his branch library on the opening day to ask for "Men of Iron" and for certain other books which he said "cost too much" to buy, for his own library. A boy who was looking for "Hugh Wynne" remarked, with a twinkle in his eye, that he had had nothing to read all summer except *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Many and intimate were the revelations concerning the reading of boys and girls during that long, oppressive summer vacation, for

although denied admission to the libraries, the children were not prevented from talking with the children's librarians as they met them in the streets. No one who spent any part of that summer in New York will ever forget it or fail to give books a different place in the vacation days of those who stay at home as well as of those who "ride away" to the country, the mountains, or the seashore. The element of companionship in books selected for vacation reading was brought home more vividly than ever before. Rows of perennial favorites stood unopened on library shelves—the very books we had so often recognized in the hands of children who, like "David Copperfield," might be seen "reading for dear life" on the doorsteps of crowded streets, on the roofs of tenement houses, on the fire escapes, in shady corners of parks and playgrounds, on the recreation piers, on ferryboats, under the bridges:—wherever it is humanly possible for children to read library books, there they are read in vacation time.

"Don't you think John ought to follow

some special line in his reading this summer?" asked an anxious mother. By all means, if he has a special interest and a craving to satisfy it with books, provide him with a liberal supply of histories, books of exploration, Greek myths, Arthurian legends, Norse stories, natural histories, stories of animals, Indians—whatever may be drawing him most strongly; but don't lay out a special course of reading for John or Mary if you want them to love books and form natural associations with them. Let them choose for themselves from a large and varied collection the books they would like to take away with them or would like to read to forget that they cannot go away. You would have liked to do that at their age, wouldn't you? In the presence of books and children the anxious mother succumbed to the reminder of her own youth, and next day came accompanied not only by John and Mary but by Barbara and Michael, to each of whom is accorded the vacation privilege of taking eight books on a card. The anxious mother is no longer appre-

hensive concerning John's future career, but lends yeoman's service in testing books from the children's standpoint, and is rewarded by being told she may choose two of each eight "to please yourself."

JOHN'S LIST

(John is just a nice all-round boy about thirteen years old.)

The Boys' Book of Model Aeroplanes.
The American Boys' Book of Signs, Signals, and Symbols.
The Book of a Naturalist.
The Cruise of the Cachalot.
Captains Courageous.
The Three Musketeers.
The Mysterious Island.
Kidnapped.

BARBARA'S LIST

(Barbara is rather dreamy—wants to be beautiful and popular, about twelve years old.)

Golden Numbers.
How to Swim.
Andersen's Fairy Tales. (For The Snow Queen, The Wild Swans and The Little Mermaid.)
Stories from Old French Romance.
Kenilworth.
Cheney's Life of Louisa Alcott.

Little Women (to reread).
Master Simon's Garden
or
Mary's Meadow.

MARY'S LIST

(Mary is ten years old and very practical—climbs trees.)

When Mother Lets Us Make Candy.
The Swiss Family Robinson (for rereading).
What Happened to Inger Johanne. (Delightful stories from the Norwegian.)
The Slowcoach.
Conundrums, Riddles, Puzzles and Games.
Jack and Jill.
The Peterkin Papers.
The Princess and the Goblin.
The Adventures of Buffalo Bill.

MICHAEL'S LIST

(Michael is nine years old, with a strong interest in natural history and fairy tales.)

Grimm's Fairy Tales.
The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood.
The Children's Book.
The Jungle Book.
Alice in Wonderland.
The Pied Piper.
The Burgess Bird Book.
Pinocchio, the Adventures of an Italian Marionette.

Michael will welcome "The Burgess Animal Book" when it is published. He pores over Hornaday's "American Natural History" and every illustrated natural history he can find.

"I've a shrewd suspicion," says the children's librarian, who contributed this selection of books made by one family, "that each child will read the other's books. In that way the impractical ones often get the benefit of the selection of the practical minded, and vice versa. It will be good for Barbara to read 'The Peterkin Papers,' and it won't hurt Mary to read 'Golden Numbers' on the sly—up in her tree."

There is always much rereading of old favorites in the summer vacation: "Mother Goose," "The Nonsense Book," "The Child's Garden of Verses," "Just So Stories," the "Arabian Nights," the "Fairy Tales" of the Grimms and Hans Andersen, "The Home Book of Verse for Young Folks," "Little Women," "The Last of the Mohicans," "Treasure Island," "Alice in Wonderland," "Through the Looking Glass," "The Princess and Curdie," "The

Jungle Books." And from this rereading there comes an invigoration of mind and spirit which is often reflected in the speech of the returned vacation reader.

"How do you do, Miss Elegant Fowl," was the gay salute of one small boy to the librarian who received his vacation books, and well it is for her prestige that she is able to respond in the same vein. She must not become stodged with books or with theories of children's reading if she would take a natural place in vacation days as "the lady who knows all the books by heart—knows how to skip the dull parts and how to substitute one book for another when the one you really want is being read by somebody else."

"I've finished 'The Wonderful Adventures of Nils' and I want you to send me the second volume right away," wrote Edouard from the country last summer; "I'm half way through 'Little Smoke' but I like 'Nils' the best." Edouard, whose devotion to Thornton Burgess has been chronicled in *The Bookman*, was ten years old when he discovered the Swedish classic

in a selection of eight books chosen with a view to relieving the boredom of a summer vacation in a country boarding house where he was stranded with his mother and baby sister. The selection included stories of Indians, pirates, South Sea Islanders, the "Just So Stories," and Thornton Burgess's "Danny Meadow Mouse." The second volume of "Nils" was promptly dispatched by post. On Edouard's return "David Blaize and the Blue Door" lay upon my desk to be greeted with: "Here's another of those books I know aren't true but I wish might be. May I take it?" He vanished, to return next day with eyes shining over the chapter on flying. "Something like 'Nils' only a different country and a younger boy," he said, as he picked up a copy of "Lilliput Levee" which he read on the spot, chuckling delightedly. "May I take this to learn to speak in school? It would make everybody laugh except our teacher." He decided that the risk might be too great for an ordinary school day. "Lilliput Levee" must be read in holiday mood.

This summer Edouard, at eleven, is still reading Thornton Burgess but is discovering Seton's "Biography of a Grizzly," "Wild Animals I have Known," and "Two Little Savages." "The Red Fox" of G. C. D. Roberts has given him great delight. I know that he will listen fascinated to such chapters as "Bats," "The Toad as Traveler," and "A Sentimentalist on Foxes" from Hudson's "Book of a Naturalist"; and will read for himself "The Discontented Squirrel," which is in reality a very charming story for still younger children with its vivid picture of the migration of squirrels.

Edouard goes to a boys' camp this summer, and it is easy to picture him vibrating between the groups of older and younger boys at story-hour time. If the opening chapters of John Muir's "Story of My Boyhood and Youth" are read aloud he will be held with the same interest he has manifested in the lives of Joan of Arc, Mark Twain, and Cardinal Mercier. "I can tell a great man when I see him—nobody needs to point him out

to me," Edouard said of Cardinal Mercier as that great figure passed down the stairway of the Library and stopped at the entrance to speak to a little girl who stood outside.

This quick sensibility of childhood to great things in life or in literature is too often forgotten by those who would bring them together by a preconceived plan. Opal Whiteley's "Journal of an Understanding Heart" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, and Hilda Conkling's "Poems by a Little Girl" are stirring something deeper than surface criticism in the minds of those who have not lost their sense of wonder in the presence of childhood. I look upon their publication not alone with the joy of an exploring reader, but as most significant signs that we are moving toward a larger and freer development of writing and publishing books for children in the twentieth century.

" 'The Call of the Wild' is the best book I ever read," said one of a group of boys, two or three years older than Edouard, who were discussing dog stories in a

branch library recently. "I read it for the first time in Alaska," he continued, "and I know it is true to life there. When I came home I read it again and I liked it even better here in New York than in Alaska—I could imagine myself back there."

This boy, who has traveled extensively in South America and Europe as well as in the United States, brings to his reading at the age of twelve a background of great interest to other boys. Nearly all of the group had read "Lad" and liked it very much. One boy had read John Muir's "Stickeen," a wonderful story to read aloud. "Pierrot, Dog of Belgium" was recommended by another. "The Dogs of Boytown" was characterized as a book they would have liked better had the boys and the town been left out. The interest of this book is in its information concerning different breeds of dogs from the standpoint of a well-known writer on the subject.

"Bob, Son of Battle" and "Greyfriars Bobby" would appeal to such a group of

boys more strongly two or three years later.

There is a librarian whose love of dogs and keen interest in vacation reading come strongly to mind as this article reaches, not its end, but its space limits—Caroline M. Hewins of the Hartford Public Library. Long before children's rooms were opened in our public libraries or nature study had been undertaken by the schools and museums, Miss Hewins's Agassiz Club and Vacation Reading Hours were established features in the summer life of the City of Hartford, radiating to other cities and country places through book-lists and articles on children's reading of equal value to parents, teachers, and librarians. Miss Hewins's "Books for Boys and Girls. A Selected List" is the best list I know of. The latest edition, printed in 1915, the lineal descendant of a list selected by her in 1882 in which Tom Sawyer is given his true place among children's books, is characterized by the same wide knowledge of books and rich experience of life. This list may well be

supplemented by lists including more recent publications selected by The Bookshop for Boys and Girls of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston, and by the new Handbook for Scout Masters, and the lists of books for Boy Scouts selected by Franklin K. Mathiews of the Boy Scouts of America. "Scouting for Girls," the new official Handbook of Girl Scouts, contains a reading-list selected by its editor, Josephine Daskam Bacon, in conference with scout leaders and librarians.

No representative list of books has yet grown out of the varied experiences in summer camps for boys and girls. Meanwhile, old and new books are being sent to summer camps in increasing numbers to be tried out in the open, and to gather fresh associations from vacation readers.

INDEX

A LIST OF AUTHORS, TITLES, AND ILLUSTRATORS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

I

J

K

L

M

N

Q

R

S

T

U

V

W

Y

Z